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THE

LIFE OF JOSEPH BARKER.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

EDITED BY HIS NEPHEW,

JOHN THOMAS BARKER.

23502
ac.

WITH STEEL PORTRAIT.

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Joachim Bauer

Engraved by J.Cochran from a Photograph

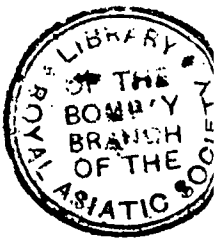
To the Memory of my Uncle,

JOSEPH BARKER;

AND TO HIS FRIENDS AND ADMIRERS, BOTH IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA,

This Volume is Dedicated

BY THE EDITOR



PREFACE.

THE Editor desires to forewarn the readers that the several parts of this Memoir were penned by Mr. Barker at different periods of his chequered career, and in widely different moods. In particular, the earlier portion was produced at a time when his mind was in a condition of bitter revolt against old ties and religious beliefs. The criticism in which he indulges is not without its measure of truth as a picture of the meaner side of sectarian religious life; but in several respects it has been warped by personal prejudice, as Mr. Barker frankly acknowledged at a later period, and in a more chastened mood. With regard to the literary character of the work, it must be borne in mind that alike its excellences and its defects are those to be looked for in the style of a man gifted with rare freshness of heart and mind, but destitute of the advantages of regular scientific culture. To the thoughtful student of human nature this mingling of grace and faultiness, of truth and error, in the form as in the matter, will have a peculiar interest.

In the literary idiosyncrasies of Mr. Barker's style he will detect a touching record of the long and hardly-hampered struggle through which a strong mind fought its way from ignorance and poverty up to knowledge and fame. In the grave flaws of character so naïvely betrayed in the earlier narrative he will trace the secret causes of subsequent religious disaster; while his recognition of what was good and noble will prepare him for the closing picture, in all its beauty and pathos, of a troubled human heart, through those instincts of truth and love which were its best inheritance, finding its humble and happy way back to faith and hope and God.

CONTENTS.

CHAP.		PAGE.
I.	BIRTH AND ANCESTRY	1
II.	PARENTAGE, RELIGIOUS BELIEF, SUPERSTITION	10
III.	CHILDHOOD, EARLY LIFE, AND HARD TIMES	25
IV.	YOUTH AND MANHOOD.—RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE	38
V.	SELF-EDUCATION.—BOOKS AND READING	53
VI.	SELF-EDUCATION.—BOOKS AND READING.—SCHOOLDAYS	68
VII.	FIRST ATTEMPTS AT PREACHING	85
VIII.	PREACHING LIFE (*continued*).—DECLINES TO GO OUT AS A TRAVELLING PREACHER FOR THE OLD CONNEXION.—JOINS THE NEW CONNEXION	98
IX.	GOES OUT AS A TRAVELLING PREACHER.—HANLEY CIRCUIT.—FALLS IN LOVE.—HALIFAX CIRCUIT.—GETS MARRIED, AND IS REPRIMANDED BY CONFERENCE.—BLYTH CIRCUIT.—NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE	115
X.	NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—THOMAS SNOWDON	134
XI.	SUNDERLAND CIRCUIT	146
XII.	SUNDERLAND CIRCUIT (*continued*).—ADMITTED INTO FULL CONNEXION.—APPOINTED TO SHEFFIELD	154
XIII.	SHEFFIELD CIRCUIT.—CONTROVERSY WITH UNBELIEVERS.—DISTURBANCES IN THE CONNEXION	167
XIV.	SHEFFIELD CIRCUIT.—REVIVALISM	183
XV.	SHEFFIELD CIRCUIT.—TEETOTALISM, ETC.	201
XVI.	CHESTER CIRCUIT.—TEETOTALISM (*continued*)	217

CHAP. PAGE.

XVII. CHESTER CIRCUIT (*continued*).—A CONFESSION.—DRIFTING 237

XVIII. MOSLEY CIRCUIT, 1837.—EARLY EFFORTS AT REFORM.—DISCUSSIONS WITH THE SOCIALISTS.—DISTURBANCES IN THE SOCIETY.—HIS EXPULSION 245

XIX. TRIALS AND DIFFICULTIES.—BECOMES PASTOR OF A CONGREGATION OF BARKERITES AT NEWCASTLE.—UNSUCCESSFUL EFFORTS AT REFORM.—CELEBRATED DISCUSSION WITH WILLIAM COOKE.—ADOPTS THE VIEWS OF THE QUAKERS.—TURNS PRINTER AND COMMENCES "THE CHRISTIAN."—BECOMES AN UNITARIAN . . . 262

XX. POLITICAL LIFE.—ARREST AND TRIAL.—DEPARTURE FOR AMERICA 286

XXI. AMERICAN EXPERIENCE.—FARM LIFE.—ASSOCIATES.—FRESH TROUBLES.—REMOVES.—NEBRASKA.—PRAIRIE ADVENTURES . . . 311

XXII. MISERABLE RESULTS OF SCEPTICISM.—DEATH OF HIS MOTHER.—LONELINESS.—ILLNESS IN HIS FAMILY.—DEPRAVITY OF UNBELIEVERS.—LECTURING TOURS.—DISSATISFIED WITH HIS POSITION 325

XXIII. HIS RETURN TO ENGLAND.—THE VOYAGE.—JOINS THE SECULARISTS.—RE-READS THE BIBLE.—CHANGES IN HIS VIEWS.—DISCUSSION AT GLASGOW.—HELPS TOWARDS CHRISTIANITY.—DECLARES HIMSELF A CHRISTIAN 342

XXIV. TEACHINGS OF EXPERIENCE.—LAST ILLNESS.—DEATH, AND CONFESSION OF FAITH . . . 366

INTRODUCTION.

THE AUTHOR'S REASONS FOR WRITING THIS HISTORY

MY reasons for writing the history of my life are various.

1. I want to remember it myself. There are many things in it calculated to be of service to me in my after-life if I can keep them fresh in my memory, and I find I cannot do so unless I make haste and write them down.

2. There are some things in my history which may give pleasure, or prove of service, to my friends and kindred, and it adds to my own enjoyment to minister to the comfort and welfare of those so dear to me.

3. Again: if *I* do not write the history of my life, somebody else will. I have so many friends, and so many foes,—and my friends are so kind, and my foes are so fierce,—and I have been mixed up with so many stirring affairs, that there is sure to be a life of me of some kind, sooner or later. And if there is to be a life of a man, it is desirable that it should be a true one. And I very much question

whether any one else would be able and willing to give so correct and truthful an account of my life as myself. My enemies would hardly do me justice, my friends might do me more than justice; and both might err for want of a knowledge of matters known only to myself. I am aware that in some respects a man may be better known, or more correctly estimated, by others than by himself. Still, there are numbers of things in a man's life that no one can know so well as himself, and numbers of matters which no one can put in their proper light without his aid.

4. And a man does not prevent others from writing his life by writing it himself. He does not, by giving things in the light in which they presented themselves to him, prevent others from giving them in the light in which they presented themselves to them; while he may, by stating facts known only to himself, enable others to give difficult or doubtful matters a juster interpretation. If, therefore, someone else should feel disposed to write my history, it may be as well for him to have my own account to aid him in his work. Whether my own account be all it ought to be or not, it will at least supply a number of materials which would not probably be found elsewhere.

5. One of my principal reasons for writing the story of my life is, that I may give to those who may have no opportunity of getting it in any other way,

a true idea of the Methodist Society, and of the character and workings of the Methodistical form of religion. Methodism is a matter of very great importance, and deserves to be carefully studied, and ought to be well understood, both by the divine and the moralist, the statesman and the philosopher. It has exerted a powerful influence on the nation and the Church, and on the interests of the world at large. It has, in some respects, done more mischief, and it has, in other respects, done more good, than people generally imagine. It has been a fearful plague, and an inestimable blessing. I do not hesitate to say, that while it has been perplexing and bewildering, tormenting and maddening vast numbers of individuals, it has been laying England, and the Continent of Europe, and the world at large, under obligations which have never been duly acknowledged, and which can never be fully repaid. And it is still proving a blessing in some of its workings, while in others of its workings it is still a plague. It is one of the most important and interesting matters of our day. The rise and spread of Methodism form one of the grandest episodes in the history of Europe, if not in the history of the world. And the Methodist Church is at this moment one of the most important organisations on earth. And Methodism itself is one of the most remarkable forms of Christianity which the Christian world can boast. It is one of the most wonderful mixtures of good and evil, of truth and error, of light and darkness, of freedom and slavery,

of human weakness and of human virtue, that the world has seen for nearly fifteen hundred years. I am wishful to present a true and faithful account of the system, neither concealing its blemishes, nor overlooking its excellences. Having been a Methodist nearly twenty years,—having passed through all its stages, from a private member on trial, to a superintendent travelling preacher,—having taken part in all its various kinds of meetings, from the prayer-meeting and class-meeting, to the district-meetings and Conferences,—having experienced all kinds of treatment in the body, from great favour and high promotion, to censure and expulsion,—having heard all kinds of Methodist preachers, both local and travelling, both learned and unlearned, and having conversed with many of them in private, and corresponded with them by letters on every variety of subject,—having passed through all a preacher's stages myself, and having had the freest intercourse with all classes of members, both in their religious and social meetings, and having had, during the whole of this long period, an inquiring and observant mind, I can hardly fail to have the information needful for my task. A doubt may rest on the minds of some as to whether the way in which I have been treated by the Methodists may not lead me to do the system injustice; but I trust that a perusal of my remarks will remove this doubt.

6. Another object I have in view in writing the story of my life is to give a true and living view of

other forms of religion and of other religious bodies with which I have become acquainted in my pilgrimage through the world thus far, as well as to portray the character of certain irreligious or non-religious parties outside the various Churches, and to reveal the working of their views.

7. And lastly, my lot has been so varied, and many portions of my life have been so eventful, and it has happened to be mixed up with so many important affairs, that it can hardly be otherwise than that some parts of my history will prove interesting to every class of my readers. And I have travelled much. I have visited nearly every town, and almost every interesting spot, in my native land. Twice I have visited the Continent, and sought the scenes made memorable by some of Europe's greatest worthies. Thrice I have crossed and recrossed the great Atlantic. I have friends in every State of the great American Republic, and have travelled, and preached, or lectured in the greatest part of those States.

And I have travelled far into the spiritual world. I began my course in the far backward regions of darkness, superstition, and terror, and have journeyed the whole distance from that dreary land to a region of comparative light and joy.

And I have had experience of a variety of callings. The children of the poor have few hardships and few sorrows of which I, in my childhood, had not painful experience. The struggling youth has few difficulties with which I have not grappled, and few anxieties with

which I have not been harassed. I have been both servant and master, both teacher and preacher, both tradesman and farmer, by turns. And I have read many books, and written and published not a few. I have started and conducted five periodicals, all of them well supported in their day. I have had experience of the influence of religion, both in its ruder and more gentle forms, and have felt both the terrors which it can inspire, and the joys which it can impart

On all those matters I shall have something to say, both in the way of narrative and speculation, as well as in the way of counsel or suggestion. On every subject it will be my endeavour to give you just what is strictly true, and to put the truth in such a form that you, my readers, may think it worth your while to read it, and may find, when you have reached the end of my story, that you have not read in vain.

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH AND ANCESTRY.

I WAS born in 1806, at Bramley, an old country town in the West Riding of Yorkshire, on a hill about four miles north-west of Leeds. My father before me was a native of Bramley, and so were my grandfather and great-grandfather. My ancestors on my grandfather's side are said to have lived in the neighbourhood of Keighley. The first of the Barkers that settled in Bramley was a younger son of the Keighley family of Barkers, who was put apprentice to a Bramley clothier, to learn the cloth-making business. He was sent to Bramley much against his will, and he urged his father time after time to allow him to return to his mother and his home; but his father paid no regard to his entreaties. He ran away at length, but his father carried him back, and punished him severely in addition. He stopped at Bramley after this, and finished his apprenticeship. His father now wanted him to return home to commence the cloth-making business in the valley between Keighley and Skipton. But the son refused to return. He could not forgive his father's unkindness and severity.

He married at Bramley, and his descendants form no inconsiderable portion of the population of my native town. The Musgraves, my ancestors on my grandmother's side, had lived in Bramley from time immemorial.

In a list of the rateable inhabitants of Bramley, formed in 1663,* I find the name of one of my ancestors rated for two hearths, while another member of the family appears some time after as churchwarden.

The cloth manufacture appears to have been carried on at Bramley from a very early period. About 1791 horse-mills came up, and John Haley, a first cousin of my father's, was one of the first to adopt the improved machines. The first mill in the township to which steam power was applied was the mill at Hough End, built by Samuel Barker, my grandfather, John Haley, his nephew, and John Lister, about the year 1798.

Bramley† was by no means a model village, either in point of morals, or of civil orderly behaviour. When the first *slubbing* came into Bramley, that had been carded and slubbed by machinery, the women rose in a mob, and pulled it out of the cart, and trod it under their feet in the street. In 1783 the authorities of the village found it necessary to call a vestry meeting to consider the many felonies, misdemeanours,

* Wilson's "History of Bramley," p. 18.

† *Ibid.*, p. 48.

and mischiefs committed in the township. They passed resolutions, and published an appeal, urging the people to behave themselves in a sober, decent, and orderly manner; but, alas! before the end of the year, we find from the town's accounts that the overseer, Samuel Barker, had to pay money for the repair of windows "which were broke at a town's meeting."

The people of Bramley, not excepting the richer and more respectable classes, were exceedingly superstitious in the days of my grandfather, as you may see from the following entries, copied from the accounts of the same overseer, Samuel Barker:—

"December 8, 1783.—Expenses on bargaining with conjuror from Skipton to cure Matthew Hudson's daughter, 1*s.*

"February 1, 1784.—Astrological doctor for Hudson's daughter, 12*s.* 6*d.*"

It would be a pleasant and curious thing to be able to trace the history of one's family to its beginning; to learn all its joys and sorrows, its toils and travels, its up and downs, its virtues and its vices; to see in what state of society it had lived, what various forms it had borne, what mighty changes it had witnessed in the religions and sciences, in the politics and trades of the world, and how it had acted in those different states, and how it had been influenced by those different changes. It would be a curious thing, I say, to learn all this; and it would be a pleasant thing too. I often feel very curious when I think of this subject;

when I wander in thought through the long dark ages that have rolled over one's family, from the time when it was first placed on the earth to the present hour. I should like to know whether any of my forefathers were prophets or martyrs, reformers or heretics, or whether they were the foes to reform or not. I should like to know whether they took the lead in finding out and teaching the great truths of religion; or whether they hung behind, and hindered and kept back the improvement of the world. If any of them were reformers, I should like to know their history. I should like to know what errors they detected and exposed; what truths they discovered and spread abroad; what corruptions they sought to reform, and what institutions they sought to establish. I should like to know what enemies they had, and what friends and helpers they met with. I should also like to know what were their hopes, and disappointments, and what were their fears and deliverances. But these are things which we cannot know at present. Well, God's will be done. That darkness which God throws over things is as good as light. It is better, perhaps, that the history of the past *should* be so generally lost. Perhaps the improvement of the world is promoted by so great a forgetfulness of the past. Perhaps our ignorance of the events of the past prepares us better for a knowledge of those truths which are eternal.

A knowledge of the history of particular men from the beginning of our race to the present times might

unfit us for better knowledge, and indispose us for our proper work. Some one observes, that if the old were not to die, they would prevent the progress of science, and the improvement of our race. The old are generally opposed to change, and their years naturally give them great influence; so that if God were not to take them away, they would hold fast the world in its errors and follies for ever. Even as it is, reform is no very easy work; but if the old were to live for ever, and to increase in numbers and power without bounds, it would be next to impossible, if not impossible altogether. And as it is with *men*, so it is, to some extent, with the *history* of men. If the history of each family and tribe were handed down from the beginning, it would tend to fix the families of the earth in one state; to stereotype the race; to perpetuate errors and follies; to make the childishness of our race eternal. The history of our forefathers could hardly fail to make us tremble at innovation. Either innovation would destroy old history, or old history would prevent innovation. We cannot both multiply new things, and retain our knowledge of all the old. The tendency of old history to perpetuate old errors and vices, and prevent the improvement of our race, is manifest in the influence of the Scriptures. What multitudes are kept from that perfection of virtue for which God has designed them, by their reverence for the sentiments and customs of the fathers and founders of the Jewish nation. There are multitudes that have no

idea that there are any better rules of life, or any more certain principles of religious knowledge, than those contained in the Old Testament. The ten commandments are still, by multitudes, supposed to be the most perfect law in existence. Even Christianity itself is made void to the majority of men, by their reverence for the more ancient but less perfect system of Moses. Reverence for ancient men produces reverence for their imperfections. Americans justify slavery, and Englishmen justify war, and Turks justify the practice of having more than one wife, and Jews justify circumcision, by their reverence for Moses and Abraham. This reverence for ancient men and ancient things has had similar bad effects in connection with Christianity. Some of the earliest Christians used water baptism, anointed the sick with oil, laid hands on people, when they appointed them to certain duties, exchanged the friendly kiss on meeting, broke bread, and washed each other's feet, and hence, as if all these things were the highest and most important forms of heavenly excellence, they are practised and contended for by many as essential to Christianity, and as necessary to salvation. Some have stood out against the doctrine that the sun stands still, and that the earth rolls round it, while others oppose the plain teachings of geology and zoology, and others again believe in witchcraft, astrology, necromancy, and demoniacal possessions on the same principle. They find that certain notions were held in ancient times,—

they find that those notions were held by the good of ancient times, and their reverence for antiquity makes them cherish its errors. And if people are so influenced by the histories of people to whom they can claim no peculiar relationship,—if Gentiles are so influenced by the history of ancient Jews, how would they have been influenced by their own particular ancestors? See how the Jews are influenced by their reverence for their ancestors. See how the nations of the East are influenced by their reverence for their early fathers. The Jews were so wedded to antiquity, that they could see no beauty even in Christianity itself. Their reverence for the institutions of Moses was like a veil, which prevented them from seeing the truth and excellence of Christianity. And this veil remains upon the hearts of many of them to this hour.

And if the Scriptures have this unhappy influence to some extent, what would be the influence of particular histories of all the various families of the earth? It would ruin the world. It would frustrate all God's purposes respecting us. It would split the world into sects without end, and make each sect an image, a resemblance of ancient ignorance and ancient vice. The Scriptures give us the history of the *best* of men; they give us the history of the best of institutions. The principal persons presented to our view in Scripture were reformers; discoverers of great truths; detectors of old errors; opponents of corruption; teachers of righteousness; examples of

temperance, of justice, and of charity; lovers of truth, lovers of God, lovers of goodness, lovers of men. This was especially the case with Abraham and Moses, with Job and the prophets. It was still more the case with John, and Jesus, and Paul. There is, in consequence, an influence exerted by Scripture history, of a most healthy and heavenly kind. We never hesitate to place the Bible by itself, as worthy of a place above all ancient books in existence. Still, its better influence is checked or enfeebled by those other influences of which we have spoken. Nay, more; those other influences of which we have spoken are so powerful in many cases, as to prevent people from feeling those higher and more heavenly influences, which the faithfulness of Abraham, the perseverance of Moses, the patience, the purity, the charity of Job, and the still more perfect life and teachings of Jesus and Paul, were designed to exert on mankind. It is well, therefore, that we have no more of antiquity than we have. It is well that we have what we have; but it is better perhaps that we have no more. It is well that the fathers are dead; and it is well that their history is forgotten. It is well that the history of the *greatest*, the *wisest*, and the *best* of them has remained; but it is well that the history of the rest has perished. Though the remnants of antiquity which we have have a tendency to hold the human race back in some things, they have a tendency to help us forward in others. This is true both of our Jewish and Christian

antiquities, especially of the Christian. Even the tendency of Pagan antiquities is not wholly bad. The remnants of Grecian and Roman antiquities have their uses, though their evil influences are both great and numerous. But all things have been ordered well; and if we could see the way in which God has done things, and know the reasons of all He has done, we should be filled with thankfulness and wonder, and should cry out with all our souls, "He has done all things well." And as all things have been well and wisely done in the past, so will all things be well and wisely done in ages to come. All is well. The Lord reigneth, and men should rejoice and be glad.

CHAPTER II.

PARENTAGE, RELIGIOUS BELIEF, SUPERSTITION.

BOTH my grandfather and grandmother were of well-to-do families, who, according to the custom of those early days, were both farmers and manufacturers. They were married very young: my grandfather was not sixteen, and my grandmother was younger still. I have heard my father say, that when they had two children, the ages of father, mother, and children did not amount, all put together, to more than thirty-two. My grandmother died when she was rather young, and left her husband with twelve or fourteen children. My grandfather did not make the best of his lot. The loss of his wife was a severe blow to him, and he became despondent and reckless, neglecting both his business and his children. He owned a quantity of land round the spot on which the mill was built, which afterwards, along with the mill, fell into the hands of his nephew. One of the earliest things I remember is being in one of the fields when the last harvest was gathered in previous to the land going out of the family. His children had now to look out for themselves and for each other. Some..

of the girls got situations, and some of the lads got places as apprentices, and the rest did I know not how. One of the daughters was married to a Church of England clergyman at Aberford, in Yorkshire. My father went apprentice to a clothier, and stopped in his place till he was twenty-one. Soon after he was loose, he went into the militia, and was drilled and marched up and down the country for a number of years, till he had a wife and one or two children. He found soldiering a miserable life, and I have heard him tell sad tales of the sufferings and wrongs to which he and his comrades were subjected. The militia were used more harshly and cruelly than the regulars. Some were flogged to death, or died soon after flogging; and some were flogged and drummed out of the regiment, and left in the hands of a press-gang, to be carried on board a man-of-war. The officers crossed and tormented the men on purpose to make them enlist into the regulars, and many of the men did so. Among the rest, two brothers of my father went into the regulars, and were engaged in the wars both in Europe and Asia for a number of years. The elder, Joseph, was never married. The younger, Benjamin, left a young wife with two children, who reared her little ones in credit, gave both of them good businesses, and at the end of the great Revolutionary wars, after an absence of twenty years, welcomed back her husband to a comfortable home and an unchanged heart, without a reproach and without a murmur. Wherever this story is read,

good, manly hearts may do honour to my gentle and noble Aunt Dorothy.

My father stuck to the militia, and though he had anything but an easy or a pleasant life of it, yet in two respects it was overruled for good. In the first place my father got a good and clever wife, and in the second place he got brought under the power of religion. In the first place he got a good and clever wife. She was poor, like himself, and had been born and brought up in the midst of hardships and sorrow; but she was a lively and spirited woman, and very strong and steadfast in her love. And she could read and write, and sing and spin, and live on homely fare, and make old clothes look almost as well as new, and make a house with but little furniture and little fire look nearly as comfortable as richer dwellings. She was very fond of her husband, and unutterably fond of her children. Her soul was full of love, and it flowed forth most freely towards her family and towards mankind at large. My father met with her in Devonshire. She was a native of Chumleigh, in that county. When she married, she was about eighteen years of age, and my father was about twenty-two or three. While he remained a soldier, she lived chiefly at home with her mother and sister. At length she brought forth her firstborn son, and some time after joined her husband in camp. How long she stayed with him I cannot tell, but at length she removed into Yorkshire, and finally settled down at Bramley. While my mother was at Bramley,

my father got among the Methodists in Kent, and began to be religious. This was the beginning of a new life to him, and he rejoiced in the change very much. Religion brought him into fresh company, gave him new thoughts and new feelings, new loves and new pleasures, new hopes and new work. It was, in truth, a new creation or new birth. He now felt more strongly for his wife than ever, as well as his little infant child. He wanted to write her a letter, but, alas! he could not write; he could not even read. He did not know a single letter in the alphabet. He knew the names of the letters off the book, but he did not know the forms of the letters. He could say his A B C without a book, but he did not know which letters were a b c, and so forth. He could not tell the name of a single letter when he saw it in a book. But he would try to learn. So he got a Reading-Made-Easy, and began. He found the alphabet, and looked at the first letter, and he knew they called it *a*. So he looked what it was like, and tried to make another like it with a piece of chalk or something. He then looked at the second letter, which he knew was called *b*, and learned what that was like; and so he went on to the end. He then went to the small letters, and learned them. It was well that my poor father met with a Reading-Made-Easy with the A B C in right order; for if he had happened to meet with one with letters out of order, like some that I have seen, he would have been quite fast. As it was, he went on cleverly.

By a little help he learned to put the letters into words, and spell; and was soon able both to read and write. He now sent word to my mother about all that had taken place. She, poor woman, was quite overpowered, and resolved to be religious too. She was resolved to see her husband as well; and sent for my father to come to her, and before long they were living in their own little house together, as happy as love and religion could make them. They were poor, but what of that? They had but few wants; they had both of them been used to hard work and poor fare, so that hardships were no strange thing to them. They had no concern about appearances. They sang and prayed, they talked and read together. They went together to the class, the preaching, and the prayer-meeting. My mother hugged her child, and my father walked alone, and both sent forth their souls in prayer to God for His blessing, and their prayers were heard and answered. They looked on the preacher as God's trumpet, and every word was welcomed as the word of God. Every feeling of love or joy was regarded as the working of God's Holy Spirit, and they looked upon themselves as dwellings of the Holy One. And they were right; for so they were. They knew nothing of theology, nothing of controversy. Their simple creed was that there was one God, one Christ, one hope, one religion, one heaven. To love God and all mankind, to shun evil and do good, to go through life with clean hands and pure hearts, rejoicing in hopes of everlasting

blessedness, was all they cared about. This was their religion, their theology, their all.

They looked on all who professed religion—all who professed to have been awakened and converted after the methodistical fashion—as really saints. They listened to their prayers, and to the statement of their experiences, in the most reverent and humble state of mind, regarding all as the utterings of the Holy Spirit. Those who could pray well, who were ready with their words, and warm or earnest in their manner, they regarded as specially gifted, specially favoured, specially inspired, by God. On those who professed to be wholly sanctified, and who, in agreement with their profession, spoke always in a solemn, religious tone, talking only on religious subjects, my parents looked as angels of God. The reverence they felt for them was almost unbounded; the awe with which they looked up to them was unutterable.

There were three persons whom they looked upon as the best, the most holy of all. Their names were William Field, John King, and James Hobson. William Field I never knew. John King and James Hobson I did know. James Hobson was a very old man when I knew him, not less than eighty years of age. I was too young to know much of his character for myself; but he used very frequently to give out this verse of one of Wesley's hymns:—

> "What! never speak one evil word,
> Or rash, or idle, or unkind!
> Oh how shall I, most gracious Lord,
> This mark of true perfection find?"

He used to speak as seldom as possible about earthly things, and to say what he did say as gravely and solemnly as possible, and he always added a few words about religion to those with whom he had to do. John King I knew a little better. He was a schoolmaster part of his life, and when I was a child I was sent to his school. In his manner of talking, in constant solemnity, and in his endeavour to act in agreement with his notions of entire sanctification, so that all he said and did should be but the work of that direct and special influence of which he believed himself the organ or the instrument, he excelled even James Hobson. And my recollections of his conduct and character are all of a favourable kind.

William Bramwell was the favourite preacher with the people generally, and with my parents among the rest. Bramwell professed to live in a state of perfect sanctification continually; and he constantly urged others to search for the same blessing. He was considered the most successful preacher in the Connexion, both in awakening sinners, and in helping awakened sinners into liberty, and bringing them forward into full sanctification. He was liberal to the poor, and is said to have been very faithful in reproving and warning the rich, denouncing sin without respect of persons. He was also believed to have the power of reading people's hearts, of telling who were hypocrites and who were sincere, who were backsliders and who were not; and I have

heard my parents relate instances in which he singled out persons by means of this supposed supernatural gift, before the public congregation or the private meeting, and charged them with hypocrisy to their face.

To this wonderful preacher the people flocked in large crowds, in hopes of obtaining, under his preaching or prayers, either the blessing of justification, or the second blessing of full and instantaneous sanctification. My parents went among the rest, longing and sighing for the second blessing. Some who went, being greatly excited, believed they had got the blessing, and shouted for joy; others returned sad and sorrowful. Many of those who fancied they had got the blessing on Sunday, believed they had lost it again on Monday. Some got the blessing one moment, and lost it the next; got it while they were praying, and lost it before they got up from their knees. My parents, being either unable to get the blessing, or else unable to keep it, went on mourning and struggling as before. Sometimes they prayed and wrestled on their knees; at other times they sung their prayers at their work; while at other times they mourned their shortcomings at the class. One of my father's favourite hymns was the following, which I have heard him sing while spinning at his jenny, many and many a time:—

"My God! I know, I feel Thee mine,
And will not quit my claim,
Till all I have is lost in Thine,
And all renewed I am.

"I hold Thee with a trembling hand,
But will not let Thee go,
Till steadfastly by faith I stand,
And all Thy goodness know.

"When shall I see the welcome hour
That plants my God in me?
Spirit of life, and health, and power,
And perfect liberty.

"No longer then my heart shall mourn,
While, purified by grace,
I only for His glory burn,
And always see His face."—H. 361.

My mother's favourite hymn was the following :—

"Give me the enlarged desire,
And open, Lord, my soul,
Thy own fulness to require,
And comprehend the whole:
Stretch my faith's capacity
Wider and yet wider still;
Then, with all that is in Thee,
My soul for ever fill."—H. 372.

This she used to utter in her prayers, rather than sing it at her work.

Then would follow a mystical hymn, of a tender and touching kind, like the following :—

"Thou Shepherd of Israel, and mine,
The joy and desire of my heart;
For closer communion I pine,
I long to reside where Thou art:
The pastures I languish to find,
Where all, who their Shepherd obey,
Are fed, on Thy bosom reclined,
And screened from the heat of the day.

"Ah! show me that happiest place,
The place of Thy people's abode,
Where saints in an ecstasy gaze,
And hang on a crucified God:
Thy love for a sinner declare,
Thy passion and death on the tree;
My spirit to Calvary bear,
To suffer and triumph with Thee.

"'Tis there, with the lambs of Thy flock,
There only, I covet to rest,
To lie at the foot of the rock,
Or rise to be hid in Thy breast:
'Tis there I would always abide,
And never a moment depart;
Concealed in the cleft of Thy side,
Eternally held in Thy heart."—H. 228.

In this way did my father and mother spend a considerable part of their life,—troubled, alarmed, perplexed, bewildered, writing bitter things against themselves, charging themselves with unbelief; finding fault with their own hearts, charging them with being hard, deceitful, and desperately wicked; blaming the devil, and at times strongly tempted to entertain hard thoughts even of God Himself. Thus did they toil, and pray, and wrestle, and wait for sanctification, and all the while they were sanctified in the true and Scripture sense of the word.

My parents were both believers in witchcraft and fairies, as well as in some other superstitions. They believed that some persons, especially certain women, had the power of causing diseases in men and cattle, and of harassing and injuring people in various other

ways, by an evil wish, or by diabolical influence. I remember my father telling a curious story about some mischief that was done to the beer of R. A——, a friend of his, by witchcraft. He said that while working in the tub it became green, and so stringy, that instead of falling in drops when poured, it would hang like treacle. Who it was that they supposed had bewitched the beer, I cannot tell; but both my father and R. A—— believed that it was bewitched sure enough, and so did we all, so far as I can remember. Poor R. A—— believed himself hurt by witchcraft in other things besides his home-brewed beer. A female class-leader also once fancied herself bewitched, and at one time, not thirty years ago, a great part of the town was thrown into alarm and uproar by witchcraft tales. Some said they had found *witch cakes* hid behind their fireplaces, and others said they had found them in their chimneys, and others in other places. These witch-cakes were masses of dough, I suppose, stuck full of crooked pins, old nails, and the like. Those cakes were to be placed somewhere about the house or premises of the parties to be bewitched. The injury to be done to the party who was to be bewitched, would, I suppose, depend on the will of the witch herself. But sometimes, according to the common talk, the parties would be taken ill, not of a fever, or consumption, or any known or common kind of complaint, but of some other complaint which no one could, perhaps, describe; but which was more terrible, perhaps, than any common

complaint. Or perhaps a child would be struck dumb, or seized with sudden weakness, and waste away. Or perhaps the cattle would die, or the cows would suddenly refuse to give their milk; or the milk would all be bad, or all things would go cross in the house, the field, or the shop. Then nothing could be done by common remedies for the cure of witchcraft. Nothing could be done but by charms, or some dreadful and cruel arts. One person, a Methodist, who professed to be able to cure witchcraft, told me that the way to cure a person bewitched in his own body, was by bleeding the person, and letting the blood run into a very hot fire. By this means, he said, the witch herself might be burned to death. When the blood ran into the fire, the witch, wherever she might live, and whatever she might be doing, was, he said, thrown into the fire at the same time, and if the fire was hot enough to consume the blood, it would inevitably consume the witch as well. I once went with this person to see a poorly old man who, in my opinion, was suffering from dropsy. After we came away he asked me privately what I thought was the matter with the man. I answered, but he said he was bewitched; and so far as I know, he believed what he said.

My mother's belief in *fairies*, or *pixies*, as they are called in Devonshire, was as strong as her belief in witchcraft. She really believed that there was a race of beings, resembling men in shape, but eight or ten times less, that lived in our world, and meddled in men's affairs, hurting or helping people; making them

rich or making them poor, taking away their children and bringing others in their place, and stirring up and down unseen except by peculiar people. She never saw any of those powerful little beings herself, but one of her mother's acquaintances used to tell her that they came regularly to her house every night, and span at her wheel; that if she left the house nice and clean when she went to bed, and left a little fire on the hearth, and a mug full of fresh clean water, they never failed to come and spin up all her *shives*, or flax. She said she had looked through a crevice in the boards, and seen them many a time busy at their work. Such were the tales Joan Rew, and my grandmother too, perhaps, used to tell my mother, and she believed them as firmly as she believed in religion. Whether my father believed in such things I do not know, but I know he believed in ghosts, or *boggards*, as we call them in Yorkshire.

Still, the belief in God rose above their belief in witches and fairies; so that though they were foolish enough to cling to the superstitions of their childhood, their religious belief was, in general, the great ruling principle of their lives.

I cannot close this chapter without adding the testimony of one, to whom the stirling piety and almost perfect Christian character of Joseph Barker's parents were well and thoroughly known. The late Joseph Hill, of Bramley, in a conversation respecting my grandparents, remarked, that "if ever a man was fit and prepared for another life, it was my

grandfather, for he was a man of prayer." He was almost constantly on his knees, and prayed on every occasion, whether great or small, and especially for his children, whom he regarded with a tender care and affection only exceeded by their tender-hearted and affectionate mother. I have been told that when alone he always read his Bible on his knees, and never presumed to read it in any other posture, and would pray for hours together over it. The good old family book bears evident testimony of the piety and prayerfulness of him who used it; for some favourite portions are almost obliterated with constant use. Neither was he in any way deficient in innate and general powers of mind; but never having received any education, except what he had picked up in a casual way, the powers of his mind were not so observable as his piety. I have heard my father say, however, that his power of mental calculation was somewhat surprising and unaccountable. Without the remotest knowledge of the rules of arithmetic, and without the aid of figures, he could accomplish the most difficult and abstruse reckonings with a rapidity and accuracy that astonished even educated persons.

This estimable and pious couple lived on to a ripe old age, and their last years were spent in comfort and independence. Their joy at seeing all their children settled in life and doing well was unbounded. They beheld with wonder and delight the career of their son Joseph, as he rapidly rose to be one of the most popular and able ministers of the day, and

regarded him as a prodigy of learning and ability. They died well stricken in years, being each above eighty years of age, and were interred side by side in the Bramley Wesleyan Chapel yard. A beautiful Gothic stone marks their resting-place, and in Bramley Church a stained glass window has been placed to their memory by one of their sons.

CHAPTER III.

CHILDHOOD, EARLY LIFE, AND HARD TIMES.

SUCH were the parents of Joseph Barker. It is therefore not surprising that with such home influences he should have grown up with a decided tendency and bias towards a religious life. His parents being strongly imbued with the spirit of Methodism, the whole family were early brought under the same religious influences. From childhood they imbibed its principles and teachings, and were led to embrace its doctrines as the surest and most perfect way of salvation. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that at a very early age Joseph began to have serious thoughts about religion. He says:—When I was about six or seven years of age, I had many serious thoughts, and many strong desires to be good. I was also a ready believer in the great doctrines of religion. I believed in God, in Christ, in the evil of sin, in the rewards of righteousness, in the punishment of the wicked, and in the everlasting life of the good. And my path was unmingled with doubt. And I feared and loved God, and I loved Jesus; and I looked on sin with horror, and on

goodness with satisfaction and delight. And I loved my parents, my brothers, and my sisters, and I hated no one upon earth. And I loved God's world; I was pleased with the flowers with which He covered the fields, and with the birds and beasts with which He had peopled the earth.

And I recollect well what a struggle I had when I first told a lie. A school in the neighbourhood had a feast, ours had not; so I played the truant, after a serious struggle, to have an opportunity of seeing the scholars walk. I had a miserable afternoon, for I felt I was doing wrong, and I was afraid lest my mother should find me out. My sister found me out, and told my mother, but my mother was loth to believe her till she had asked me myself. When I went home, my mother asked me if I had been at school, and I said, yes, and my mother, as she had never found me out in a lie before, believed me. But I was sadly distressed after, when I thought of what I had done. That lie caused me days of remorse, and my sufferings were all the severer in consequence of my mother having so readily believed what I said.

Some time after this I recollect reading Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. I took the book to be a true history of some man that had found a way to heaven of his own, and often did I wish that I could find such a way. I cared nothing about the difficulties and dangers of the road; all I cared for was to find a road. My great grief was this, that I could find no way at all; or that the way of which I heard people

talk, was a way I could not see, which I could not understand, and in consequence no way at all to me. Young as I was, I felt as if I would have given anything, done anything, risked anything, suffered anything, to have had the way placed plain before me. The Slough of Despond, the Hill Difficulty, the Lions, Apollyon, the Valley of the Shadow of Death, the dangers of Vanity Fair, the perils of Jordan, were but little to me: I was prepared for all, if I could but find the way. But that I could not do. I inquired of my mother after this new way of the Pilgrim, but received no satisfactory answer; so I was obliged to go forward in the dark, or to stand wretchedly and hopelessly still.

Our parents talked about a change from nature to grace, about conviction, conversion, and sanctification; about some kind of strange mysterious faith, and we were thus set fast. If we had known that to be religious was simply to be good,—that in order to be pleasing to God, we had only to do right so far as we knew,—that to act according to our knowledge, and to seek for still further knowledge, was all that God could require of us, we might have gone on our way rejoicing, young as we were. But as it was, we were troubled very much; and after struggling after some kind of imaginary goodness to no purpose, our religious anxieties died away, and left us, perhaps, farther from goodness than before.

Other troubles had also begun to weigh upon him of a more substantial and bodily nature, which were

of themselves sufficient to crush out the last vestige and spark of spirituality from his young soul. They were a large family, eleven children in all,—four older and six younger than himself, and the struggles and sufferings of both parents and children through some of the hardest and most trying times of the present century, were such as one of them, at least, will never forget. I refer to the years of exhaustion and commercial prostration which succeeded the termination of the great European wars with Napoleon the First at the peace of Paris, A.D. 1815. This was followed immediately after by one of the worst harvests that ever was known in this country, increasing the general disorders, and producing an amount of distress and suffering amongst the working population, which drove them to the verge of starvation and despair. Still the parents of Joseph Barker laboured and strove, and struggled and prayed, and never lost their faith in God, and in an ever-watchful and beneficent Providence. Their religion supported them through many and great trials, and in trouble and affliction it was their stay and comfort, and a joy unspeakable and full of glory to the end of their long life. But their son will tell the tale of sorrow in his own inimitable style:—

There are several things (he says) connected with this part of my history which I cannot relate without some degree of reluctance. I refer to the sufferings and humiliations through which I had to pass at one period of my life, in consequence of extreme poverty.

I have many friends now who are rich, and who have never been anything else but rich. I have some friends who occupy high places in society, and who mingle with those who occupy the highest. And some of those friends may feel uncomfortable when they learn that the person whom they have acknowledged as their friend, whom they have welcomed to their houses, and treated as a brother and an equal, had the humblest origin, and has passed through the depths of poverty and want. Still, if there be any who cannot bear to have such things known respecting one whom they have been accustomed to receive as a brother, and whom they reckon as their friend, they must give me up.

But perhaps my wealthy friends will not be troubled at those revelations. Perhaps they will remember that poverty is not a crime, and that when it is not the result of crime, it is in reality no disgrace. Perhaps they will remember that the best and wisest One of our race was poor,—that at one time He was a working carpenter, and that at another He lived on what was given Him by His friends, and had not where to lay His head. Perhaps they may remember that poverty was the lot of Luther in his early days, and of George Fox, and Wesley, and that some even of the reigning monarchs of our times have been poor and penniless in their day.

But whether they remember these things or not, I must tell my story. The poor will bear with me, and reap comfort from the tale of my sorrows. The

poor, especially the young that are poor, will learn from my story, that, however great their poverty, and however severe their trials, they have still a right to hope, and may still become as happy as they would wish to be. The poor young man, who is almost famishing for want of food, and who is fancying in his troubles that the way to knowledge, to usefulness and happiness is shut against him, may find out his comfortless notion to be a mistake by reading this story, and take heart again. He may learn, not only that there is a way to knowledge, to usefulness, and to happiness, from the midst of want and sorrow, but that want and sorrow are themselves great teachers and benefactors of youth,—that there are lessons to be learned from them, that can be learned from no other teachers, and blessings to be derived from them, that can be derived from no other source. I shall therefere, as I have said, tell the tale of my sorrows without reserve, and leave the result with God.

During one part of my early life, my father was in better circumstances for awhile. He received some property from his father's estate, and became a manufacturer of cloth. But about the close of the French wars there was a very great fall in the price of wool, and consequently in the price of cloth. This, with other unfavourable events, caused a great and general panic amongst the cloth manufacturers, and perhaps amongst tradesmen generally. My father could not sell his cloth at times for much more than the wool had cost him. He was unable to go on any further

without involving himself and his family in ruin, so he gave up. He was in some debt at the time, but he paid every person his own in full. After that we were very poorly off at times indeed. We had to begin to earn our bread by labouring for other people at a time when work was exceedingly scarce, and for several years we were in very great difficulties, and had to suffer grievous hardships. Sometimes we had no work, and when we had work, wages were very low, while provisions were very high. I believe that for a year together the whole family, consisting of nine or ten persons, did not earn more than twenty shillings per week. Out of that sum, from four to five would go in rent, and something would have to go for coals and taxes. And at that time flour was seven shillings and sixpence per stone, and oatmeal was dear in proportion. We were, of course, unable to obtain sufficient to supply our daily wants. I recollect being for years together, during that period of my life, without ever having sufficient to satisfy the cravings of hunger, except on rare occasions.

One year I recollect there was a general failure in the crops of corn; the wheat was out in the fields about Bramley, as late as November and December, and never got ripened at all. A cousin of my father's had some very extensive fields of wheat thus belated, and he gave us, along with others of his neighbours, permission to go and take a quantity of it, after it had stood in the field till it had sprouted and become unfit for bread. I recollect that much of the bread

which we got that year was of a very disagreeable character. We never could bake the cakes hard quite through. A thin crust on the outside could be hardened, but the rest remained like bird-lime or paste. It was very unpleasant to eat, and unwholesome too; but we must either eat that or starve outright.

During this dreadful time, the family were greatly indebted to the kindly assistance rendered to them by some of the more wealthy members of the Wesleyan body, foremost among whom was Benjamin Wilson, the grandfather and great-grandfather of the present generation of the Wilson family. Knowing the honesty and strict integrity of my grandfather's character, he trusted the family with provisions until better times came, and was doubtless scrupulously repaid. The failure of trade, the bad harvest, and the consequent distress, were general, not only in this district, but throughout the country. They only suffered along with others, and scores of families were worse off even than themselves.

The silent streets and houses told their own melancholy tale, and the downcast and haggard looks of the men, as they stood in groups at every street-corner, confirmed it. In ordinary times, hundreds of looms would be busy at work in Bramley alone. The click of the shuttle, and the regular and steady stroke of the weaver's beam, could be heard from one end of Bramley to the other. But now you could walk through the whole length of the village, and not hear

more than two or three looms going. There were scores and hundreds of families entirely without work and completely destitute. The poor stockingers of Leicester were, if anything, worse off than their brethren at Bramley, and riot and disorder prevailed to an alarming extent in some parts of the country.

The Autobiography continues:—One of the greatest, or at least one of the most painful, calamities resulting from our long-continued poverty, and the general stagnation and uncertainty of trade, was this: We got the idea that all things on earth were utterly uncertain,—that the world, or at least that part of it where we were living, was rolling on at random,—that chance, or a dark and malignant fatality, ruled over all,—that the best days of the world had gone by, and that risks and ruin were now to be our common and unchanging lot. I felt, and others felt as well, as if prosperity was fled for ever from our own part of the world. We had an idea that things were better in America; but as for Europe, its light seemed to have entirely gone out, and its glory and the welfare of its people seemed to have perished for ever. Hence we were always afflicted with the fear of want. Even when we had plenty for the present, we had no good comfortable hope that we should have plenty long. For myself, and I believe it was so with most others at that time, I lived continually in the fear of starvation, in dread of literally dying for want of food. There

was one way, it is true, in which it seemed possible to secure a regular supply of food, and only one, and that was by becoming a soldier. But soldiering in those days was a fearful thing; it looked more like the way to speedy death, than to plenty and an easy life. I say that others, I believe, felt the same afflicting and tormenting fears of want with myself. I know that this was the case with my brothers, and I believe it was the case with my parents and their companions too, to some extent. I recollect them sitting and talking on those subjects in the most melancholy way imaginable. Emigration to America was their only hope. And this was the way of their talk: "It's over with cloth-making," said one of my father's friends; "it will never look up again." "It is here," my father would reply; "I look on it that *we might* get through, for our time; but it's the children I look at." And thus the doleful, melancholy sounds of fear fell on our ears perpetually. Oh, those were mournful, miserable times.

When I look back upon that period of my life, it seems to me at present, as if I had spent it in one long-continued state of famine. We were, of course, unable to spend much in clothing. We were often both ragged and hungry. Under such circumstances, my parents could do but little for what is called the education of their children. Almost the only opportunity I had of learning anything, except what I might learn at home, was by attending the Sunday-school. When we had work, we had no time to go

to school; and when we had not work, we had nothing with which to pay school wages, so that a Sunday-school was our only resource. What little learning, therefore, I did get, I got at home from my brothers and sisters, and at the Sunday-school. I recollect my eldest sister and my elder brothers teaching me my letters from a large family Bible that we had, and I also recollect teaching my younger brothers their letters afterwards from the same great Book.

Some people talk of the days of their childhood as their happiest days, and one man asks, "Who would not wish once more to be a boy?" But the days of my childhood were days of gloom and sorrow, and there is one at least who would not wish once more to be a boy.

There was one thing happened during the days of our poverty which was regarded at first as an additional calamity, but which afterwards proved to be a great blessing. It was this: the person from whom we obtained some work was unable to pay us our wages in money, and so paid my father with flour instead. We had in consequence more flour than we wanted, and were obliged to dispose of a portion to others, in order that we might have money to purchase other things which we needed. This unexpectedly led us into shopkeeping. When people once had flour at our house, they came for it again; and when they had got into the way of coming for flour, they wanted other things along with it. This led us to

purchase a supply of different articles for sale. Then other articles were wanted by customers, and we procured them also, and sold them, and thus became at length shopkeepers in a little way. This assisted us in obtaining what was necessary for the support of the family. My mother also got some draperies, and visited one or two neighbouring towns and villages, that she might dispose of them more rapidly, and wonderfully well she succeeded. Our circumstances improved from that time. I do not recollect after this that I ever suffered much for want of bread. We never neglected our old work of weaving and spinning, etc., to attend to the new work of shopkeeping which had come thus unlooked for into our hands. We never depended upon the shop for a living, but went on with our usual employments diligently whenever work was to be obtained. After this also the cloth trade itself began to improve, and work became more regular. Wages also rose a little, and flour and the like got cheaper. But here was another evil: we were so anxious to be straight with all the world, we were so wishful to be completely out of debt, that we worked beyond our strength. I many a time rose in summer by three or four o'clock in the morning, and kept at my work with scarcely any intermission till eight or nine in the evening; and that too at a time when I was growing rapidly. One consequence of this in my case was partial deformity in my frame, and another was increased affliction from indigestion and general

weakness. At this period of my life, one shoulder rose considerably above the other, in consequence of such constant and laborious application to the spinning jenny. This deformity disappeared afterwards, when I was favoured with a somewhat easier life and change of employment.

CHAPTER IV.

YOUTH AND MANHOOD—RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE.

THE peculiarities of Joseph Barker's character soon began to manifest themselves. As a youth he was wilful and headstrong, prone to quarrelling and controversy, and ever ready to return blow for blow. He was self-confident, impatient of control and opposition, and boldly resisted all force and compulsion, even from his parents.—One day, says he, my mother had a great deal to do to get me to school. I turned stupid, in fact, and refused to go. My mother, when she had done what she could in the way of beating, took and dragged me or drove me to school. When she got me there, she told her sad tale to the master, and complained greatly. "Betty, Betty," replied the master, "Joseph is not to be driven, he is to be led." Never mortal uttered a truer word than that; and my mother, poor woman, felt it to be true. And she acted agreeably. She gave up the driving plan at once with me, and tried the leading plan ever after, and it answered well. Many have tried to drive me since then, but they could never make anything out of it.

The same searching and inquiring turn of mind which distinguished him as a man was also characteristic of his youth. He says:—At this time I gave my parents, especially my mother, very great trouble, and caused them many hours of intense anxiety, and grievous fears, both for my present and future safety. My mother often looked at me in sorrow, and sometimes thought and even said that I seemed born to break her heart, and to bring down her grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. What tried her worse perhaps than anything else was that I tried to defend myself against her admonitions by asking puzzling questions about religion, and speaking as if I entertained doubts with respect to some of its doctrines. And then again, I caused her grief in other ways. I never was a drunkard, but I did at this period of my life begin to keep company with drunkards; and my parents were as much troubled perhaps on that account as if I had been a drunkard myself. I was also rather fond of boxing or fighting, and often tried my strength in battles with young persons like myself. And this was a source of great terror and grief to my parents.

My mind was never at rest while I was living in sin. I was almost always haunted with fears of eternal ruin, as well as troubled with strange longings after something which nothing of an earthly kind had power to bestow. Then my eldest brother lost his wife about this time. He was much afflicted with his loss, and I could not help but sympathise with him in

his sorrows. He had been always kind to me, and from the time when he first began to be religious, had manifested a deal of brotherly affectionate anxiety to have me brought under the influence of religion also; and his efforts were not without effect. The loss of his wife made him more zealous in his affectionate endeavours to reclaim me from evil, and my affection for him, and my sympathy with him in his sorrows, prepared me for benefiting the more from his endeavours. After we came from the funeral we walked together along the fields, not far from where we lived, and he talked to me very seriously. I said little in return, but I felt a great deal. I made no promises, but I felt serious purposes begin to spring up in my mind to begin to lead a religious life. There were difficulties in the way, and the thought of those difficulties created a struggle. I had my companions, and it seemed hard to give them up. I was also exceedingly fond of liberty: the thought of restraint was always painful to me; it seemed a tremendous thing to place myself under restraints which were to exert an influence over my thoughts, my passions, my conversation, my behaviour, and which were, in fact, entirely to remodel my character, my tastes, my pursuits, and thoroughly transform and create the whole anew. And the difficulty was heightened by the still remaining mists and clouds of darkness that hung over the subject of religion. Still conscience and a regard to my eternal interests called for submission, and I felt inclined to yield to

the call. Still my determination to yield was not quite full. I had gone up the street one evening in expectation of meeting with a favourite companion. I waited at the usual place beyond the usual time, and my companion did not appear. I then moved on till I came opposite the Methodist Chapel, and hearing singing in the vestry, I went to the door, and stood a short time to listen. While standing there, a person who was going to the meeting came up, and observing me listening and thoughtful, invited me to go in, and I went. I felt rather strange, so I got into a corner behind the door, and there remained till the close. I do not recollect well what were my thoughts and feelings while there, but I recollect well what took place after. My brother had been at the meeting, and had seen me come in, and regarded it as a proof that I was fully resolved to begin a religious life. As soon as it was over, and I had got out, he came up to me full of delight and affection, and of kind solicitude for my welfare, and began to talk to me in a very encouraging way. On the following Sunday morning my brother called on me to go with him to the fellowship-meeting, a meeting at which the members of the Methodist Society are accustomed to tell their experience, as they do in love-feasts. It is, in fact, a love-feast on a small scale, without the bread and the water, the tickets and the collection, and is all the more free and edifying, perhaps, in consequence of there seldom

or never being any minister there. What I heard and what I felt, strengthened my determination to live for God.

During the Sabbath and the following week, my brother still continued his kind attention to me, and seemed full of desire and anxiety that I should not go back to the world. Both he and others were wishful that I should go forward in the right way. On Thursday night someone called on me to invite me to go with him to a class-meeting, and I went. I do not recollect anything particular that took place at the first meeting. I sat and listened to what was said, and as I heard it was the custom for the leader not to ask persons any questions the first time they went, much less to expect from them any answers, I felt little anxiety or fear, and my resolution to be religious was confirmed, I believe, by going to that meeting. I went to the class again the Thursday following. That night I expected to be questioned, and to give answers to the questions that might be proposed. The consequence was, I was full of fear and anxiety; I could pay but little attention to what was said, either by the leader or by the members, my mind was so perplexed and troubled with the thought that it would soon be my turn to say something. My chief recollection of that meeting is, that it was a miserable meeting. The leader proposed his questions, and I said something in answer to them, but my mind was so confused and bewildered at the time, that I do not remember now what I said, and I am not certain

that I knew exactly what I said even at the time I was speaking. I continued to go to class regularly from that time, and never missed more than once or twice for a number of years.

I tried to believe in the Methodistical way, in some way different from the way in which I did believe, and I prayed for some extra change of heart, and for some kind of sudden, direct, irresistible, and indubitable testimony to my soul that I was converted, forgiven, accepted, and saved. And they used to pray with me very laboriously, in order to induce God to give me those mysterious blessings; but prayers never seemed to have any great effect. They were like my own, they would not bring blessings which were not to be had. I had all the faith needed, and God had no other faith to give. My heart was changed from evil to good, and God required no other change. And I had the witness of the Spirit too, testifying, in the sacred Scriptures, to the acceptance and forgiveness of all who believe and obey the gospel; and I had an inward consciousness, both that I believed in God and Christ in the common rational way, and that I had surrendered my soul, and consecrated my life and all my powers to God.

I was very much tempted after I gave myself to God, and joined the Methodist society, and that in different ways. A very short time after I joined the society, there was a great boxing match between the principal boxer of my native place and some other boxer from another part of the country. I had always

been fond of seeing a fight, so that this was a strong temptation indeed. I felt my old love of witnessing that brutal and dangerous sport come upon me with great power. The impulse was terrible; it seemed as if it would almost have compelled me to go and witness the meeting. At the same time, I felt that it would be wrong to go. I believed it to be my duty to avoid all such scenes. Then came the struggle between conscience and inclination, between duty and temptation, and no one that has not felt a similar struggle can conceive its violence. I was spinning at the time the battle was about to take place. The people were flocking to the scene of action. A great part of the people in the neighbourhood had left their work to go, and I seemed to be left almost alone. The struggle was so violent, that I forgot myself at times, and I forgot my work for a season, and stood still, as if entranced and motionless, unconscious of what was around me. But I mastered, and I never was tempted, that I recollect, in such a way again.

I said I began to go to class, but some of my readers will need to be told what class-meetings are, and how they are generally conducted.

The class-meetings are held weekly. The classes ought, according to rule, to consist of ten or twelve members; but they sometimes contain as many as thirty, forty, or fifty, and at other times not more than three or four. Each member kneels down as soon as he enters, to pray a little by himself. The leader then begins the meeting by giving out a hymn,

and the members stand up to sing. Then the leader prays, gives out another hymn, and then tells his experience. Sometimes he tells what trials he has met with, and what deliverances he has experienced through the week, what joys and sorrows he has had, how he felt at the love-feast, the prayer-meeting, or the fellowship-meeting, what liberty he had in secret prayer, how he felt while reading the Scriptures, or hearing sermons, or while busy at his work, what passages have come to his mind, or what promises have been applied to his soul. At other times he simply tells how he feels at that moment; while at other times he says nothing about his experience or feelings, but just gives thanks to God for what He has done for him, in a general way, or offers a few words of exhortation or preaching to the members. He then asks each member in turn the state of his mind. A very common form of the question is, "Well, brother, or well, sister, how do you feel the state of your mind to-night?" At other times it will be, "Well, brother, will you tell us what the Lord is doing for you?" Different leaders have different ways of proposing the question, and the same leader varies it at times. When the question is put, the member answers. Some of the members tell a long and flaming story; others say little, or next to nothing. Some speak loud, and even shout; others speak so low that they cannot be heard, either by the leaders or the rest of the members. Some are always happy, according to their story; others

are always doubtful and fearful, and can never say much either about their feelings or performances. One tells you he has been on the sunny side of the hill all the week; another says he has been on the mount of transfiguration, and that he could say with one of old, "Master, it is good to be here." Another has been with Moses on the top of Pisgah, and got a view of the promised land. Another felt that he was like the beloved disciple in the Isle of Patmos, in the spirit on the Lord's day, and that he had not lost the blessing he received under the Sunday morning's sermon all the week through. It frequently happens that when the first has told a good experience, the rest follow the example; while when the first tells of troubles and trials, the rest generally speak of having had the same kind of trials, or something similar. If the first is on a high key, they are almost all on a high key; but if the first be on a low key, the rest are on a low key too. There will generally be one or two in a large meeting that will tell a fine bright tale, let the rest tell what kind of tale they please; and there will generally be one or two in a large meeting that will tell a low, desponding story; let the rest tell what story they will. Still, it commonly happens that the first person who speaks gives the turn or the tone to the meeting generally.

I may observe that in most class-meetings, as well as in love-feasts, fellowship-meetings, and band-meetings, a happy experience is accounted creditable, while a low and desponding experience is

accounted rather discreditable. As it is generally considered an honour in the world to be rich and well dressed, inasmuch as the rich and well dressed are, in the language of the world, called *respectable;* so it is generally considered respectable or creditable in the Methodist world to be rich in religious consolations or experience. And as it commonly happens in the world that the *appearance* of wealth secures the same respect as wealth itself, so does it commonly happen in the Methodist world, that the appearance of religious wealth, the profession of rich consolations and plentiful supplies of spiritual blessings, secures the same respect and reverence that real religious excellence alone deserves. For as it is often impossible to tell whether people in the world at large are rich or poor; so it is frequently impossible to tell whether people in the religious world are as happy or comfortable as they profess to be. As some people in the world are taken to be rich when in truth they are sinking in debt, or quite beggared and ruined, so some people in the religious world often profess great attainments, and talk of great consolations and rapturous enjoyments, and are taken for something extra, when in truth they are cheerless and miserable, worthless and self-condemned. And as it frequently happens in the world at large, that the richest people care least about appearances, and sometimes dress so plainly and talk so freely and familiarly with their neighbours, that you would take them for most homely and unimportant people, while

those who are very poor, or on the point of beggary, are most extravagant in their dress and living, and most affected and particular in their talk and manners, as if on purpose to prevent their poverty from being seen or suspected; so it is in the religious world. Those who are truly good, who most excel in goodness, are frequently most modest and retiring, saying little or nothing about their feelings or attainments; while those who are worthless and base make the greatest and loudest professions. Hence in almost all religious societies, not excepting even the Quakers and the Baptists, profession is respected, and a *high* profession, joined with some appearances of great feeling and solemnity, secures respect proportionately high. There is in consequence a great and a constant temptation to people to profess what they do not feel; to say they enjoy that which they do not enjoy; to say they have a confidence or an assurance which they have not. And multitudes are overcome by this temptation. They wish to be believed to be something, or they are carried away by the force of example and prevailing custom, and use words which they do not understand, or profess enjoyments which they never felt. The leader can hardly help but know, in many cases, even while the person is speaking to him, that he is speaking at random, that he does not know what he is saying, or that he does not care what he is saying. I have myself felt, in scores and hundreds of cases, that the persons addressing me in class, or speaking before me

in love-feasts, or praying in prayer-meetings, were thus violating the great law of truth.

In many cases this false way of speaking is the result of mere thoughtlessness perhaps, or of ignorance joined with the notion that it is their duty to pray or to say something in public. The parties have no intention to deceive; but being called on to speak, or invited to pray, they begin, and catch hold of such words as they can find, whether right or wrong, whether true or false. And their words are oftener foolish or false, than wise or true. Their talk is at times most foolish and ridiculous. I will give an example or two. It is customary for people when praying for preachers, to say, "Lord, bless Thy servants when they stand up to declare Thy word: be Thou *mouth, matter,* and *wisdom* to them." This has some meaning in it when offered in reference to a preacher, especially a preacher about to preach. In other cases it would be most foolish and ridiculous. Yet I once heard a person in a prayer-meeting at Chester use this same form of expression in behalf of the sick and dying. "O Lord," said he, "bless the sick and the afflicted, and those that are in the article of death; be Thou mouth, matter, and wisdom to them." I once heard a woman say in class, "I do thank God that He ever gave me a desire to seek that death that never, never dies." And the rest of her speech was of a similar character. There was a man that was once appointed with me as a prayer-leader, that would pray a length of time, and scarce ever utter a sentence

that had any sense in it. He would pray for God to bless our iniquities, and to fill our transgressions with His Holy Spirit, that they might run like oil from vessel to vessel, refreshed with new wine.

It is customary in many classes for the leader to ask one of the members occasionally to lead the class, or a part of the class, partly perhaps for the purpose of exercising the member's gifts, and thus preparing him for after usefulness, and partly to encourage and please the member, and engage him more thoroughly in the cause. Most members like to be honoured, and it is generally considered an honour to be employed in any work, especially in the work of leading a class or preaching. It is astonishing how such honours are prized in the Methodist societies, and how much the careful or skilful distribution of such honours tends to perpetuate the strength and increase the resources of the body. Men that had not a word to say for Methodism or Methodist preachers yesterday, will talk for hours in their praise to-day, because the preacher called upon them by name to pray in the class last night, or because the leader employed them in leading a portion of the class. Men that never thought of giving above a penny a week and a shilling a quarter till lately, will now give threepence a week and half-a-crown a quarter, because they are appointed leaders or assistant leaders. Persons that never used to give more than copper at a collection, will give silver or gold now, because they were invited to sit on the platform lately at a missionary meeting,

or were appointed collectors at the late chapel anniversary. This love of honour appears to be universal in the Methodist society; it is felt all through the body, from the class and the prayer-leaders' meeting, to the district meeting and the conference.

There is little instruction given in the classes. The talk both of the members and the leaders is generally formal and commonplace; seldom or never such as is calculated to make people truly great and good.

It was to one of those classes I went. The leader was a draper of Bramley, called G—— B——. He was a ready talker and a zealous Methodist. He was loud in his praying, rather bold in his manner, but very ignorant; and willing, for anything I could ever see, to remain so. He was a great preacher's man, and fond of little honours, and would do anything to be well thought of or favoured by the preachers. He knew, too, that to be on good terms with the preachers was the way to get customers to his shop; and he was very fond of gain. He had no scruples against laying up treasure on earth, though he read over Wesley's rules to us every quarter. He was a great respecter of persons; and though he seemed to have sense enough to know that it was wrong, he had not virtue or shame enough to keep him from practising it even in the face of the whole class. He had abundance of respect for the richer members of his class, or at least he was abundantly ready to show respect to them; but with the poorer members he could use as much freedom as you like. He would

tell the poorer members to speak up; but he never told the richer ones to do so, though the richer ones were generally most prone to speak low. The rich members used generally to get into one corner by themselves, while the poor ones sat anywhere about the room. When he came to the rich members' corner, and found that scarce one of them could speak loud enough to be heard, either by himself or us, he used to feel rather at a loss sometimes what to do, especially when he had just before been urging some of the poorer members to speak; but he durst not complain, not he. Then how did he do? He did just like himself. When he knew that some would be thinking, Why does he not ask them to speak up? he would exclaim, "Glory be to God! They are as happy as queens here in the corner." I wonder how we could bear with such a shallow, worthless person for a leader; but we knew no better, I suppose, then.

CHAPTER V.

SELF-EDUCATION—BOOKS AND READING.

THE first book I remember to have read was the Bible. I read it chiefly as a book of history, and was very greatly delighted with many of its stories. The effect which it had upon my mind at this early period I can scarcely recollect, but one effect was to lead me to regard miracles as nothing improbable, and another was to impress upon my mind the doctrine of one God, the creator, upholder, and governor of all things, the ruler, the judge, and the rewarder of mankind, and to strengthen in my mind the sense of right and duty.

The next book that I remember to have read was Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. I regarded that book also as a history. I had no idea that it was a parable or an allegory. My impression was, that the whole was literal and true,—that there was, somewhere in the world, a real City of Destruction and a New Jerusalem, and that from the one to the other there was a path through some part of the country, just such a pathway as that which Bunyan represents his pilgrim as treading. And, as I have said before, I often used

to wish that I could find that way to heaven. One of the next books that I read was a History of Joseph, a work written in a similar style to that of Klopstock's Messiah or Milton's Paradise Lost, being partly fiction and partly truth. But I regarded that also as a true story. I had no idea at that time that people could write and print anything in the form of a history, that was not real matter of fact. I was naturally a firm believer in all that was gravely spoken or printed. Another work that I early got hold of was Richard Burdsall's Memoirs. Richard Burdsall was an early Methodist local preacher of York. My chief reason for wishing to see that book was, that I had heard there were some ghost stories in it. One of the stories was to the effect that he had been preaching at Calverly, and slept at night at Calverly old hall, and that through the night he was twice or thrice thrown out of his bed upon the floor in some mysterious way. I cared little about the rest of the book. I was impatient till I came to that story, and then I was satisfied.

Another book that I read was Fawcett's Advice to Youth. It was given to me by the teachers or superintendents of the Sunday-school I attended, as a reward for committing to memory and repeating some long pieces at one of the school anniversary festivals. There were some things in that book which I liked, some things that I could understand; but generally speaking it was tasteless and unintelligible, and in consequence unprofitable. I have read it again

since then, but found very little interest in it. It is a *made* book. I do not wonder that I took but very little interest in it when a child. It is, both in style and matter, quite of the common, milk-and-water, chaff-and-straw, good-for-nothing, orthodox kind of a theological book.

Some time after this I began to be fond of another kind of books. I read with great greediness all the fairy tales I could get hold of, and any kind of wild and foolish romances. I also read the tales of Baron Munchausen, A Thousand Notable Things, The Oddest of all Oddities, and a number of similar productions. I read all, in fact, that came in my way, and that with great greediness. I then got hold of the Life and Adventures of Robin Hood, Blind Jack of Knaresborough, Eugene Aram, Mary Bateman, and some other stories of remarkable persons or great thieves and highwaymen. A little earlier than this, perhaps, I read Robinson Crusoe. But that also I regarded as a true story. I had no idea at the time I read Robinson Crusoe, that there were such things as novels, works of fiction, in existence. I liked Robinson Crusoe very much till I came towards the latter part, and then I began to be weary.

A little later on I began to read another kind of books. I met with a *Pleasing Instructor* and English Reader, which I read with a great deal of pleasure. I was very fond of some of the poetry, especially those pieces in which the rhymes were perfect, and in which the lines seemed to run on at a quick trot

or gallop; but blank verse I did not like at all. After a while I met with the *Young Man's Companion*, and began to take a good deal of pleasure in reading it, especially the short pieces on natural philosophy, zoology, etc., which I found there. That book gave me a taste for philosophical reading generally, and I began to be very wishful to find books that might explain to me the various departments of natural philosophy, and introduce me to a knowledge of the universe; but I could not get hold of many such books.

One of the next works which came into my hands was Wood's "Bible Dictionary." I read that also, not so much for the religious or the theological information which it gave, as for the small portions of historical, geographical, botanical, zoological, or philosophical information that it contained.

Some time before this I got hold of some other works of John Bunyan, which partly pleased me for awhile—such as his "Heavenly Footman," his "Visions of Heaven and Hell," his "History of the Town of Mansoul," and what appeared to me then the most interesting of all his works—his "History of Mr. Badman." I liked his history of Mr. Badman best on this account, it contained a great number of most wonderful and terrible stories about fearfully wicked persons, who had been punished by Providence in a most signal and horrible way. I was particularly excited with his stories about such as had sold themselves to the devil, and had been fetched and

carried away by the devil in person, at the time specified in the written agreements which they had made with him when they sold themselves. Another work in which I found many things that I liked, was an odd volume of the *Methodist Magazine.* The things which pleased me most were extracts from Dr. Gillie's historical collections, with respect especially to the persecutions and martyrdoms of several Christians and reformers.

After I began to be religious, I read a new order of books altogether. I thought it my duty to read chiefly religious books, and I acted accordingly. Some of the religious books I met with I read with pleasure, and others of them I read with difficulty. Many a time did I trudge from the beginning to the end of a great old book without obtaining one particle of clear religious light, one particle of Christ-like, practical instruction, one particle of anything that was calculated to make me a wiser, a better, and a happier man.

Among the religious books I liked best at this time were some of Baxter's works—such as his "Call to the Unconverted," his "Saints' Rest," his "Treatise on Conversion," etc. I was also partly pleased with Watts's "World to Come"; I was better pleased still with Joseph Benson's "Sermons." They were not only tolerably plain, but were very full of rousing and terrible representations of the danger and misery of transgressors, as well as of tender and urgent exhortations; and I always liked anything of that

kind during the early years of my religious life. I read several of Wesley's works; but either they were too high for me, or else they were foolish and unintelligible in many things. I know I did not feel the same pleasure in reading them in general that I felt in reading several other religious works at that time. I have since read several of Wesley's works with great pleasure and profit, especially those on the use of money, the danger of riches, the duty of self-denial, and others of a similar character. I have also read with pleasure and profit some others of his writings. But his works generally are so full of confusion and error, that few of them are likely to have any long existence, or to be generally read by the masses of mankind.

I afterwards got some of Fletcher's works. Some of these I liked a great deal better than Wesley's works. His "Appeal to Matter-of-fact and Common Sense," in which he labours hard, and at great length, to prove the common orthodox doctrine of natural, universal, hereditary depravity as the result of Adam's one transgression, I liked exceedingly after I began to preach, and once I preached a great part of it over in one of my sermons. It seemed, as I thought then, to make the subject tolerably plain. I have, of course, since then changed my views on the subject of original sin and total natural depravity.

It was somewhere about this time, or perhaps a little later, that I first read some works in favour of infidelity, in opposition to Christianity. One of

the first works of that description which I read was a part of Carlile's "Republican." A volume of it was lent me by a neighbour who was an infidel, a professed atheist. Some friend of mine had been inviting this man to come and hear me preach, and he had offered to do so, provided I would preach from the first verse of the fourteenth Psalm, "*The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.*" I engaged to preach from that text. I examined Doddridge's Lectures, Pearson on the Creed, Dwight's System of Theology, Watson's Theological Institutes, and some others, and took all the arguments I found in them, so far as they appeared to be sound, and arranged and modified as the case appeared to require. I also noticed some of the theories of atheists respecting the origin and government of the world, as well as their chief objections to the doctrine that there is a God. I added various observations of my own to what I gathered from books, and especially on the origin of the world, and the necessity of a belief in God to human happiness. It was a long discourse, and took me nearly an hour and a half in delivering, though my utterance was very rapid. Several unbelievers came to hear me, as well as the person at whose request or suggestion the discourse was preached. What effect the sermon had on them I cannot exactly say. I believe it led some of them to think less of the wisdom of atheism than they had done. It also led the person, at whose suggestion it was preached, frequently to seek my company after

for the purpose of conversation. In addition to saying what he had to say, he lent me this book of Carlile's. I was very much struck in reading some portions of the work, and agitated and shaken by its arguments on some points. This led to investigation. I was wishful to ascertain whether those doctrines which were assailed as irrational were parts of Christianity or not. I began to converse on the subject with one of my religious companions, and I began to read on the subject as I had opportunity.

The book that I chiefly read at this time was the New Testament. I had not as yet met with any works on the corruptions of Christianity, or on the errors of what was called orthodoxy, so that I was obliged to go to the Scriptures, and search and judge for myself as to what the Scriptures taught on the points in question. Hence I was somewhat puzzled at first. I was placed in a world of comparative darkness, surrounded by apparent inconsistencies, bewildered, perplexed, at a loss what to believe and what to reject, and at a loss how to proceed in my inquiries and investigations, so as to escape from this perplexity and bewilderment, and come to a clear and satisfactory knowledge of the truth. I had not a mortal to take me by the hand and guide me; not one by a single hint or suggestion to direct me, or by any little information to set my mind at rest. I had few with whom I could speak freely. I felt also unequal to the task of unravelling by my own efforts the multiplied mysteries with which I was wrapped

round. I felt as if I were buried underground, crushed and weighed down by a great mass of superincumbent darkness, and so completely held in, that I was scarcely able to move, and it seemed as if it would have to be a long, long time before I should be able to scratch my way to the surface, and look out from the grave in which I felt myself buried, upon the light and the world above me. When I began to come near to the surface, and to see through the breaking sod above me, I caught a little glimmering of light; but I saw nothing clearly. Still I did not despair. I was determined, if possible, to clear away the darkness and the perplexity with which I was surrounded. I was resolved, if possible, to struggle from my grave, and clamber up to light, and I had some hopes that, great and arduous as the task appeared, I should at last succeed. I resolved, among other things, that I would lay aside all such words and forms of expression on religious matters as were not clearly and plainly warranted by the language of the New Testament. I was resolved to separate from all those notions that I had seen assailed in the *Republican*, and which I had been led partially to doubt, everything that was not clearly, plainly, directly, and undoubtedly taught by Christ and His apostles, and thus to reduce the doctrines, both as to substance and to words, to their purest form and to their original state. With these purposes I began to read the New Testament afresh. I soon found that in the New Testament there was no such word as *Trinity*, and I

rejected the word, and never used it after. I found but one passage in which the word *person* was applied to God, and not one in which the word *persons* was applied to Him; so I rejected the word persons in reference to God, and ceased to use it when speaking of God. I also, on searching the Scriptures, discovered that it was nowhere said that Christ had paid our debts to God, or that He had become our substitute or surety, or that He had satisfied Divine justice. I also discovered that the Scriptures said nothing about the merits of Christ, or the imputation of Christ's righteousness, or about trusting in Christ's blood, or relying upon His sacrifice for acceptance and salvation; so I laid aside all these forms of expression. I proceeded in my investigations, still labouring to separate what was plain and manifestly Scriptural from that which was not Scriptural, reforming both my religious dialect and my religious sentiments until at length I began to see clearly that some of the doctrines Carlile had spoken of as Christian doctrines, were no such things, but were appendages of men, were human inventions or traditions. By this means, partly, I was preserved from infidelity. But in the estimation of professing Christians generally, I became a *heretic*.

I was helped in searching after truth, a little after this time, by reading Adam Clarke's Commentary. I got a copy of it of one of the preachers, in parts, a part at a time, beginning with the New Testament, and I read it through as it came into my hands

Many an hour did I spend at night, after I had toiled hard at my work through the day, poring over Adam's Notes; and though I met with many things in the commentary which did not commend themselves to my mind as true and reasonable, I met with many other things that did. I also met with many things that, whether I liked them or not, had a tendency to make me think, and thus to prepare me to judge for myself between what was true and what was erroneous. Adam Clarke's Commentary also made me wishful to understand Greek, and consequently Latin as an introduction to Greek, and from that time I set myself to learn those languages.

Another book which I began to read about this time was a volume of Goadby's Bible, or illustrations of the Scriptures, printed or published by Goadby. It was the third volume, containing the New Testament: the other two volumes I had not then seen. I found this work in the workshop of a neighbour and relation, and began to read it there. I read it until I wished to borrow it and have it at home, that I might look at it more frequently. I had not read much before many religious subjects began to present themselves to my mind in a clearer and more satisfactory light than before. Mysteries that had hung around religion from the beginning, began, in part at least, to fade away. The light began to pour itself in something like its purity upon my mind. Still my poor mind, so long accustomed to darkness, was slow to comprehend the light. I began to see the Scrip-

ture doctrine of faith and justification in a clearer light than I had done before, and yet I was unable or unwilling to part at once with the old erroneous notions that had been drilled into my soul. The subject of human nature also began to present itself to my mind in a different aspect from that in which I had been accustomed to view it before. I no longer looked on man as thoroughly depraved in consequence of Adam's one transgression. I began to look on men's depravity as the result of their own unfaithfulness to the light and heavenly influences with which they had been favoured. The first chapter of Romans, when properly attended to, threw light on this subject. I saw that the depravity of the Gentile world was traced not to Adam's transgression, but to the transgressions of the guilty parties themselves; and that their fall had not been an instantaneous fall in Adam, but a gradual fall in themselves, resulting from their abuse of the light and powers which God had given them. When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but turned aside from the Creator to worship the creature, and gave themselves up to vile lusts, and thus became reprobate, undiscerning in mind, enslaved to the various forms of cruelty and licentiousness enumerated in that chapter.

I also saw the passages in the third chapter of Romans, quoted from the Old Testament writings, in a different light from that in which I had been taught to regard them by the writings of Fletcher, Wesley, and Beveridge. I saw clearly that there

was no reference to natural depravity at all. But that perhaps which relieved my mind most on this subject was what I read in the Epistle to the Romans, and in the Epistle to the Galatians, along with the notes in Goadby's Bible on those two Epistles, respecting the *flesh* and the *spirit*. I had been taught that the word flesh, in Scripture language, meant natural depravity, indwelling sin, or the sin of our nature, and that the word spirit, when put in opposition to flesh, meant the Spirit or Grace of God, or something given to man, or to *some* men, to counteract or destroy the flesh. I now began to see that this orthodox view of the subject was without authority or proof. I saw that by the flesh was meant man's body, or the animal part of his nature; and that by the spirit was meant man's soul, or the intellectual and moral part of his nature. I began to see that man, to be accountable, must be free, and that to be virtuous he must be tried. I saw that in the union of flesh and spirit in man's nature, provision was made for the discipline and trial of man. Flesh and spirit were presented to my mind as two great powers, both of them from God, and both quite right and useful in their places, yet differing in their tendencies; the flesh seeking after earthly, selfish, sensual gratification; the spirit perceiving something higher, holier, better, possessing glimpses of truth, and a consciousness of duty and obligation. The flesh, seeking to break through all restraints, and to indulge itself freely in its pleasures; the spirit dis-

covering the law of God, approving of its purity, its holiness, its equity, its goodness, and consenting to its requirements. And here commenced the struggle; here was the trial; the flesh lusting against the spirit, the spirit lusting against the flesh, and these remaining contrary one to the other, so that man could not do as he liked. If he would act so as to have a consciousness of rectitude, the flesh must be denied; if he would have the pleasures which the flesh covets, the spirit must be resisted, and man must be convicted in himself of sin. Either the lusts of the flesh must be crucified, that the spirit may live and grow up to perfection, or the spirit must be overpowered and enslaved, that the flesh may live and revel and satiate itself with its forbidden delights. When I saw this, there appeared no longer any mystery about the origin of evil: *liability* to sin was the natural result of man's constitution, of man's moral freedom, of the conflict between the spirit and the flesh, and sin itself was the natural result of man's neglecting to keep the flesh in its place of subjection to the spirit,—of his neglecting to regulate its instincts, and to limit its pleasures and indulgences by the spirit. Then also I began to see what constituted a life of holiness, and what a life of sin;—what it was that made man pleasing to God, and what it was that brought down on man God's displeasure. Nothing could be plainer than the teachings of the Apostle on these subjects. "To be carnally minded is death, to be spiritually minded is life and peace." "If ye live after the flesh,

ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." "The minding of the things of the flesh is enmity against God." "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. vi. 7, 8).

CHAPTER VI.

SELF-EDUCATION—BOOKS AND READING—SCHOOLDAYS.

I BEGAN about this time (viz., when about sixteen years of age) to turn my attention to Latin and Greek, and my mind was less occupied for awhile with reading books on religion. I also began to learn a system of shorthand writing. I commenced the study of arithmetic also, and grammar, mensuration, algebra, and the like. I also began to read something in history, especially the history of England, and Rollin's Ancient History. The study of these things partly diverted my attention from subjects of controversy, but they tended to strengthen my mind, and give me closer habits of thought, and greater carefulness of judgment, and thus prepared me, when I returned to the study of religious subjects again, to study them to greater advantage.

I had at this time no school to go to, and I had to work hard, so that I was obliged to learn what I did learn during the short intervals of my usual labour. My work was spinning chiefly, but when I was spinning *warp* I could contrive to work and to read and study at the same time. *Warp* had to

be twisted or twined twice or thrice as much as the *weft*. When the thread had been drawn out to its proper length, I had to stand till I gave it from a dozen to twenty rounds more. While I was standing and giving it those extra rounds, I contrived to get a look at my book, which I had fixed upon the jenny gallows, and read a sentence or two each draw. I thought over what I read till I had drawn out the threads a second time, and while twisting them, I got another glance at my book, and read another sentence or two, and so went on. I also contrived to read a little even when I was spinning weft. When I was learning Latin, I was obliged to do more than just look at my book: I had to write exercises. I accustomed myself to write exercises on every part of speech and on every rule in grammar, and I could not do that without leaving off my work for a short time. I therefore took this plan: I committed a rule to memory, and got to understand it fairly, and then stole a little time to write a single exercise, and in that way I went through a great part both of Valpy's exercises, and of Turner's. I also found a little time for my studies in the morning. And the only instruction which I got from any one, I got in the morning. I used to go almost every morning to see Joseph Sutcliffe, one of the Methodist travelling preachers stationed at that time at Bramley, and, from five to six o'clock, have a few lessons from him in reading English, and in studying English grammar; and then at six o'clock I used to visit Joseph Hill, B.A., a school-

master at Bramley, and a Methodist local preacher, and have a few lessons in Latin with him. Both Mr. Sutcliffe and Mr. Hill were very kind to me, and must often have put themselves to trouble and inconvenience on my account. And they not only gave me instruction, but helped me to books as well.

Joseph Sutcliffe gave me a copy of an English grammar which he had published himself, and he also gave me a copy of the Vulgate Latin Bible. He also lent me Massillon's Sermons, and Horne on the Psalms, both of them books which I had never seen before, and which I read with a good deal of profit and delight. It is rather curious: I liked Horne on the Psalms best at that time; but when I read those books again at an after period, I liked Massillon best. Indeed, Massillon became one of my favourite authors, and I yet regard him as one of the ablest writers of sermons in the world. Mr. Hill also lent me books with the greatest liberality, and assisted me in the purchase of books. He lent me "Watts on the Improvement of the Mind," which I liked very much, and read it twice through, though I thought there were rather more words in it than necessary. He also lent me "Watts's Logic," which I read through.

It was at Mr. Hill's that I first heard Shakespeare mentioned, in a conversation between my friend and Mr. Samuel Lister Booth, a young lawyer of Bramley. A year or two after I met with a volume of his works, and read it with great delight. What pleased me most was the simplicity and beauty of his style. He had

always a meaning in what he said, and you could easily see his meaning. I had at this time been so accustomed to meet with dull, mysterious, and unmeaning stuff in many religious books, as they are called, that I felt quite delighted to read something that was rational, plain, stirring, and straightforward. I have often read Shakespeare since then, and never without pleasure; though I am far from regarding him, as some do, as one of the first of moral teachers.

Mr. Hill helped me to a Greek and Latin New Testament, Greek down one column, and a literal Latin translation down the other. This helped me in studying both Latin and Greek. He also helped me to a copy of "Grotius on the Truth of the Christian Religion," in Latin, and assisted me in translating it into English. He first lent me his own copy, and then procured for me a copy for myself. He assisted me in a similar way to a Latin grammar, a Latin dictionary, as well as other elementary works. Indeed, I owe to the kindness of Mr. Hill almost everything. While most of my fellow-townspeople neglected me, disregarded me, neither offering me instruction, nor supplying me with books, nor deigning even to converse with me on any branch of learning, or on any subject in connection with religion or science, Mr. Hill, a stranger just come to the town, was like a brother to me. He invited me to his lodgings, addressed me as a being designed by God to become a man, offered to instruct me in anything which he understood himself, and poor and unattractive as I was,

both in manners and appearance, he treated me with the greatest respect, and was not ashamed to become

"My guide, philosopher, and friend."

I shall never forget his kindness so long as my powers of memory remain, and I can never cease to wish for opportunities of testifying my gratitude, and of making some suitable returns for his kindness.

The manner in which Joseph Hill was led to take so much interest in me was as follows: A number of young persons met on Saturday evenings to exercise themselves in preaching, and their meeting-place was a chamber over one of Mr. Hill's rooms. I joined this company of young preachers, and took my turn in preaching. Mr. Hill, it seems, could hear our performances from his room, and had heard mine among the rest, and his attentions to me began from that time. Some time afterwards I was requested by a cousin of mine to write a letter to her brother, who was dangerously ill in the Isle of Man. I wrote a letter of considerable length, urging him to direct his thoughts to religion. This letter was taken to Mr. Hill by my cousin before it was sent off. He read it with surprise and pleasure, as I was told, and after that he encouraged me to study grammar, Latin, and the like.

Nothing could have had a happier or a more powerful effect on my mind than the kindness and respect which I received from Mr. Hill. Though Mr. Hill was but a poor schoolmaster at that time, yet, being a stranger and something of a scholar, he was generally

much respected, even by the richer portion of the people. And when I found myself noticed and cared for by him, and even treated with brotherly respect, it made me feel I can scarcely tell how. I felt as if I had risen from the rank of nothingness to that of being: I felt as if I really was a man, or destined to be one, and as if the world had not been made in vain. I felt as if I had been an outcast from the world before, an outcast from the world of thoughtful, intellectual, honourable men, and as if I was now admitted within its circle. It was, in fact, a new era in my history; it was like the commencement of a new life to me, or of a new feeling of life.

When any of my townsfellows had spoken to me in the way of counsel or reproof, they had generally spoken harshly, unkindly, as if they thought I was good for nothing but to be kicked and cuffed. When a lot of young people were singing once, I innocently enough joined in, never dreaming but that I was singing tolerably well, when one of them, a sort of leader among them, said, "Prythee, hold thy *din*; thou puts everybody out of tune about thee; thou art like a Jack-ass rawting" (braying). Then again, when I told William Windham that I had begun to learn grammar, he said, "Thou may as well give it up, for thou'lt never learn it: I have been at it seven years, and I can't understand it yet; and I'm sure thou'lt never make aught out in it." (William Windham was an eccentric Methodist Local Preacher of Bramley). So also, when I told John Wilson that I was learning

shorthand, he said, "You'd better learn to write long hand;" and when I told him I was beginning to learn Latin, he said, "You'd better learn English, I think." And this is a sample of the harsh and discouraging manner in which I was generally addressed by my townsfellows. The greater part of them, however, seemed hardly to think me worth even a word of discouragement. Mr. Hill treated me quite differently. He gave me to understand from the first, both by word and behaviour, that he thought I might become a scholar, and do well in the world, and be of use in it. He encouraged me to learn everything I had a fancy to learn, and was ready to help me in learning. He always encouraged me to hope for success, and I did hope. If he reproved me, it was with gentleness; if he undertook to correct my errors, he did it with respectfulness. He treated me as if I was capable of becoming good for something, and he increased my desires, and strengthened my determination to learn all I could, and to live as I ought. I shall never forget the gentleness of his reproofs. Like some others I have seen in my lifetime, I had a disposition, when in company, to begin talking, before another had done. I did so once in Mr. Hill's company. I began to speak while he was saying something. He instantly stopped, and, without either a word of reproof or a frown, began to listen to me. I saw at once I had done wrong, and stopped, that Mr. Hill might proceed; but he still waited for me to go on. I was quite ashamed of myself, and I never

transgressed in that way again before him, and not often, perhaps, before anyone else. One evening when I was walking with him I used the word *impious*, putting the accent on the wrong syllable, as if it were sounded impioús: he simply took occasion to repeat the word in a following sentence, and my error was effectually corrected. And this was the kind, the gentle, and respectful manner in which he corrected me in all things.

Joseph Sutcliffe was very much of the same disposition as Joseph Hill. Both of them showed the same desire that I should do well; both of them thought there was something in me, which, if cultivated, might make me a useful man; and both were condescending enough to stoop to become my teachers, and kind and generous enough to give or lend me books. Mr. Sutcliffe became interested in me in consequence of hearing me pray at a prayer-meeting. When I went, according to his invitation, to see him at his house, he told me that I was to be a divine. I did not understand at that time what the word 'divine' meant, but I supposed it to mean some kind of a preacher, and was glad to hear such a prediction. He was very wishful to have me become a travelling preacher, and did what he could to prepare the way for it; but he only remained in the Circuit about a year, I believe, so that his plans were not carried out. I was greatly afflicted when he left the Circuit; I felt as if I had lost a dear relation, and mourned bitterly for many days. He frequently wrote to me, and I

wrote to him; and even after I joined the New Connexion, he still addressed me as one of his children, and gave me his fatherly advice.

While Mr. Hill was teaching me Latin, Mr. Sutcliffe was teaching me English grammar. But Mr. Hill was not aware, for a length of time, that while I was receiving instruction from him in Latin, I was receiving instruction in English grammar from Mr. Sutcliffe; nor was Mr. Sutcliffe aware that while he was instructing me in English grammar, I was receiving instruction in Latin from Mr. Hill. Both had begun to teach me, each in his own way, without any knowledge of each other's plan, and I received the instruction of both, and made the best use of them I could. After a while, Mr. Hill told me I might now begin to learn English grammar. I told him I had been learning it for some time. He was astonished at that, and began to examine me, and was delighted when he found how far I had gone. About the same time, Mr. Sutcliffe said I might now begin to learn Latin. I told him I had begun a good while ago. Mr. Sutcliffe seemed more astonished than Mr. Hill had been, and questioned and examined me at some length. After he had examined me, he said I was far enough advanced to begin to learn Greek; so I began that morning, and before the close of the day, though I had to spin all day, I read in some way the first chapter of Matthew's Gospel through in Greek.

The study of English grammar helped me to learn Latin faster, and my Latin exercises helped me to

understand the English grammar, so that I got more rapidly on with both than I should have been likely to do with either of them separately.

I went on learning Greek, but durst not tell my friend who was teaching me Latin, for fear he should think I was attempting more than I could accomplish; but it was not long before he said he thought I had gone far enough in Latin to fit me for beginning with Greek. I told him I had begun with Greek. He then examined me to see how far I had gone, and seemed somewhat surprised at the proficiency I had made.

While I was thus learning English and Latin, and Greek and shorthand, and working at my business from twelve to sixteen hours a day, I was also occupied in preaching on Sundays, and in preparing sermons also during the week. Besides preaching, I regularly spent, at this period, many hours on the Sunday in visiting, in company with two or three religious companions, several old and sick people, to talk to them about religion. I also taught at the Sunday School as well, besides attending, both through the week and on the Sabbath, prayer-meetings, class-meetings, fellowship-meetings, and preachings. So that I was completely and constantly occupied. At length I began to be unwell,—I mean more unwell than usual. My stomach was exceedingly disordered. I had the heartburn almost all day long, as well as other symptoms of indigestion. I also felt a general weakness. I had frequent attacks of quinsy, and violent attacks too. Then I

got the erysipelas in my left hand, and nothing that I could do seemed to have any power to remove it. This so disabled me that I could not pursue my regular work. I had, in consequence, more time at my disposal for learning, and I made some use of it. I recollect the first time I had a full hour for writing Latin exercises. It seemed so great a privilege! And the hour seemed so long compared with the few moments I had been able to snatch from my daily labour at other times, that it seemed as if it would hardly ever come to an end. But I had now many hours a day for near a month together, and I got on with my exercises very rapidly. At length, when nothing seemed to have any effect on my complaint, and when it was plain my illness would not allow me to go on with my regular work, my father thought he might as well let me go to school for a short time, and employ myself in study altogether. This was a delightful proposal to me. It was just the thing I wanted. I had often wished to go to school, but it had seemed as if there was very little prospect of having my wishes realized. We were, however, at this time in better circumstances; and my father was therefore better able to do something in assisting me in my learning than he had been at any former period. He accordingly sent me to James Sigston's school at Leeds.* I was there as a weekly boarder. I had now nothing

* A noted Methodist school at that time, which sent some able men into the ministry, amongst others, David Stoner.

else to do but learn, and I gave myself up entirely to the work. I went on with my Latin; I studied Arithmetic, Mensuration, Geometry, and a little Algebra. I did something, though little, at Book-keeping; but as the Book-keeping was all theory and no practice, I did not understand it well.

Mr. Sigston had rather a large and good library, which was left at the service of the teachers and boarders. This was a great advantage to me. I had never had free access to any large quantity of books before, much less any considerable amount of leisure for reading or looking over books. I had now both books and leisure, and I read a good many of the books, and looked over or looked through almost all the rest. It was here I first met with Baxter's "Christian Directory." I was more delighted with this book than any I had ever seen. It was so full, so comprehensive, and, generally speaking, so clear and so practical, and in all respects so adapted to my tastes and wants at that time, that I felt it to be an exceedingly rich treasure. I read in it almost continually in my hours of leisure, until I had read it through. I believe no book ever did more to store my mind with good religious thoughts and practical Christian truth than this book did. Perhaps no book ever exercised a more favourable and powerful influence upon my own mind than this, and no book contributed more to give me what preparation I ever possessed, for instructing, persuading, and edifying my fellow-men.

Another work which I met with here was Lucas's "Inquiry after Happiness," and some other practical works of his. I read these with pleasure and with profit; but the style was not so natural, nor were the thoughts so rich and practical, so level to my capacity, as Baxter's were.

Another work which I met with in the library was Law's "Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life." I read this work also both with pleasure and profit, and even now regard it as one of the richest, best, most evangelical, and truly Christian books in the world. I also met with Downame's works,—a large, thick quarto volume, which pleased and profited me. The perusal of it enriched my mind with fresh additions to my little store of religious knowledge. But Baxter and Law have improved on further acquaintance with them; while Downame and some others have gone down in my estimation.

It was in this library that I first met with the writings of the great English poets, and it was about this time that I first began to see any sense, or beauty, or worth, in works that were written in what is called blank verse. The first great poet that I got hold of was Milton. I read his "Paradise Lost" at a gallop. After I had begun, I felt little or no inclination to rest till I had got to the end. I also read a collection of small poems, on "Death and the Grave," by Porteus, Blair, Gray, and Young. I then read Young's "Night Thoughts;" but I found it difficult to understand many parts of the book. Some parts I understood

well enough, and relished them highly. Indeed, many passages seemed to be the pure result of heavenly inspiration. But I did not think quite so highly of Young afterwards, when I found that so many of his richest sentiments were borrowed from Seneca and others; that they were not so much the overflowings of his own soul, as translations from the writings of the classics.

It was about this time I met with the volume of Shakespeare of which I have spoken, the first book of plays I ever met with. I read this volume with great greediness, and my thirst for poetical reading was increased thereby. I then read Cowper, and Pope, and Dryden, and Goldsmith; Rogers, Akenside, Thomson, and many more, which I do not particularly recollect just now. I also purchased the works of Byron and read them. I was so fond of poetry at one time, that I bought or borrowed, as I had opportunity, every poetical work I could meet with.

While I was at school I read Grotius on the "Truth of the Christian Religions," in Latin, and translated it into English. I read parts also of Virgil, Ovid, and Horace, Cicero, Florus, Justin, Sallust, Livy, Tacitus, Seneca the philosopher, and Seneca the dramatic writer, and some other Latin works. I was most pleased with Cicero. The first time I recollect to have felt a strong relish for beauty of style and true eloquence, was while reading and translating one of Cicero's orations. There seemed such a breadth.

such a brightness, and such a fulness of soul about Cicero, that I was quite delighted, and sometimes almost enraptured, while translating him. Cicero's thoughts also appeared to me more natural, more true, more rational than those of most other Latin writers I looked at.

I think it would be about this time that I read Richard Watson's "Theological Institutes." Some things in this work I did not well understand, so I read them and left them. Others I did understand and approve, and some I understood but did not approve. About the same period also I read through the whole of Wesley's "Christian Library," so called, in fifty duodecimo volumes. Some of those works I liked very well, and others I did not like. Some I could not understand at all, such as Arndt's "True Christianity," Ambrose's "Looking Unto Jesus," some works by Preston, and others of a similar stamp. In one or two cases I read from the beginning to the end of a volume without having a clear conception of any one thing the writer had said. Being too modest and diffident at that time to lay the blame on the writers, I laid it on myself, supposing that the reason why I found nothing clear, intelligible, profitable in the books, was the weakness of my own mind, and my lack of ability to understand what I supposed might be the deep things of God. I have looked at some of these books since, and found I laid the fault on the wrong party; that the reason why I could not understand them was, because

there was nothing to be understood. Others of the works composing the library I liked well. Law's "Serious Call" was one I had read before. Baxter's "Saint's Everlasting Rest" was another that I had read before. The Homilies of Macarius formed another volume. Those I liked tolerably well, especially as they had been written so very early in the Christian era. The Epistles of Ignatius, Polycarp, and some other relics of antiquity contained in the Library, I did not like. Jeremy Taylor's "Holy Living and Dying" I liked middling, but his style seemed too wordy. What impression was made by other parts of the Christian Library I do not now recollect.

Another book that I read somewhere about this time was Mosheim's "Church History." This work opened almost a new world to my mind; and a strange, dark world it was. Oh how amazed I was to find how those who were regarded as the Fathers of the Christian Church quarrelled, reproached, persecuted, abused, and murdered one another; what trifles they made into essential articles of faith; what foolish and nonsensical notions they put into their creeds as fundamental doctrines of Christianity; with what fierceness they struggled for power, with what craft they sought to supplant each other, and to enslave the people; with what greediness of soul they grasped after wealth, and to what a fearful extent they succeeded in corrupting and perverting, in obscuring and almost destroying, the religion of Jesus. I shall never

forget the impression made on my mind by reading this history of the Church by Mosheim. I could not wonder, when religion was presented to men in such forms as it bore in Mosheim, that many should reject it as a priestly fable or political device, and loathe both it and its pretended ministers.

CHAPTER VII.

FIRST ATTEMPTS AT PREACHING.

IT may not be amiss to give here a short account of my labours and trials and successes as a preacher. At first I supposed, according to the general doctrine, that everyone whose duty it was to preach, should have some special supernatural call to the work. I had an impression upon my mind from the beginning of my religious career, and even from the time I was twelve or thirteen years of age, that it would some time be my duty or my lot to preach and teach the Gospel; and I accordingly began to look and wait for the special, supernatural call to engage in the work, which was so generally considered necessary. In what form the call would come, I could not tell. I was therefore left to judge for myself when I had the call. One day when reading John Nelson's Journal, I was very much affected at one part, and the impression that I was to preach the Gospel was very strong upon my mind. I saw that the work was one of great difficulty and responsibility, yet it appeared to me that to engage in that work would be my duty, and I burst into

tears. I regarded my feelings on this occasion as the special or supernatural call, and began to prepare myself for the work of preaching accordingly. My views about a call to the ministry are now very different from what they were then. I now consider every man called to preach the Gospel who has ability to preach it, and who sees around him persons who are in want of Gospel instruction. The religion of Christ requires us to love God with all our heart and soul and mind and strength, and to love our neighbours as ourselves. It requires us accordingly to do all we can to promote God's glory and the welfare of mankind. If a man can promote God's glory and the welfare of his fellow-men by preaching or teaching the Gospel, he is bound by those general commands to do so. To wait for any special, supernatural call to induce him to engage in the work, is foolish. He ought to begin to teach as soon as he has learned the truth. He ought to employ all his powers in communicating to others that light and those blessings which God has communicated to him.

We have a general, a universal, an eternal call, to learn the truth, to live righteously, do good, and make everybody as wise, good, and happy, as possible; and he who waits for a further call is either foolish or something worse.

I cannot, however, look back upon the steps I took in reference to preaching, with unmixed approbation and satisfaction. I did many things I should

not do now, many things which I should now regard as very unnatural and wrong. One of those things was this :—There were several young men, members of the Methodist Society, as already intimated, who, before I had joined the Methodist Society, had formed a meeting for the purpose of exércising themselves in preaching. They met on Saturday night, in an upper room, and each person was expected in his turn to deliver something in the shape of a sermon. They took texts, and divided them according to the usual fashion, and tried to talk awhile on each division. They did not speak to one another for one another's edification; they simply spoke for the purpose of *practising*, or exercising themselves in the art of preaching. I was invited to this meeting, and went. I was requested to take my turn in preaching, and did so. I fixed upon a text, and tried to prepare a discourse. My text was, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." My sermon was to be on Sanctification, or Christian perfection. To prepare myself I looked at John Wesley's work on that subject, and at his sermons also. I met with another book, a little old one, on the same subject. Who its author was I do not know. I also got Pike's "Dialogues on Sanctification," and read them; and with these, along with my Bible, I contrived to collect a considerable amount of matter, and thus provided, I went to the meeting and preached. I do not now recollect exactly what I said, nor can I remember what kind of notions

I dealt with; but I suppose I must have got on tolerably well in talking, for the young men at the meeting spoke favourably of my performance, and encouraged me to go on. One of them even whispered in my ear that I should one day be a travelling preacher. I preached in this private assembly several times, and generally, if not always, with what was considered tolerable success. Once I preached on eternal torments. On this occasion I read Watts' "World to Come," Benson's "Four Sermons on Hell," and that part of Baxter's "Saint's Rest" which speaks of the misery of those who lose that rest; as well as the Bible and some other books, to supply myself with descriptions of the miseries of the lost. My descriptions were sufficiently long and terrible, and my hearers were more satisfied than ever that I should make a preacher.

The scenes at this preaching meeting were at times most ridiculous or pitiable. Sometimes a young person would get up to preach, give out his hymn, go through his prayer, and read over his text, and then stick fast, and stand dumb as a post. At another time the person would deliver a fine introduction, divide his text into three heads, then forget what they were. Sometimes the preacher would remember his heads, and repeat them over and over, without being able to add a syllable by way of a *tail.* And such ludicrous and pitiable looks they would wear in their embarrassment, as would have moved to a smile the gravest soul on earth. One

night the preacher got on pretty well for a few moments, and then broke down completely all at once. He looked round for a moment or two, and then exclaimed: "Friends, I'm fast, I cannot get on. I sometimes have my mind full of good ideas, and when I begin to talk they all fly away, and I have not one left." The meeting could hold no longer. We burst out a-laughing in spite of ourselves, and it was a long, long time before we could so far recover our gravity as to think ourselves fit to conclude with singing and prayer.

This was one thing that I could not do now. I feel the greatest repugnance to everything like preaching in the way of practice or of trial of one's ability. It seems to me that men should never talk or preach but in good faith, from their own convictions, and for the purpose of teaching or edifying others. I felt even then that they were not the right kind of meetings; and some time after I did myself form another kind of meeting for mutual improvement in religious knowledge, where each one was required to bring a written article, on some particular subject, which was read and criticised expressly for the benefit of all who were present.

It was not long before I was invited to preach at one of our home missionary or out-of-the-way country stations, in someone's place. I went and preached. My text was, "Say ye to the righteous, it shall be well with him, for he shall eat the fruit of his doings: but woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him; for the

reward of his hands shall be given him." The place where I preached was between Pudsey and Bradford, and was called Gibraltar. It was in a private house, and the room was crowded, and the weather being very hot, I was almost parched or choked with thirst before I had finished. My object was, I believe, to do good, and I laboured with all my might. It was altogether a simple, practical, persuasive sermon. It contained a sprinkling of orthodox errors, but much of it was no more than what I should preach even now. I do not recollect that any of the audience commended my performance, or gave me any encouragement to persevere, except a poor old aunt of mine who happened to be there. She, poor woman, thought I had done wonderfully well, and invited me to go and preach at her house whenever I had an opportunity.

The next time I preached was at Jumble's Well, another place near Pudsey. My text was Ezekiel xxxiii. 11: "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" I really felt considerable concern for those that were neglecting religion, and urged upon them the unreasonableness of going forward in sin. I preached the next time also at a place near Pudsey. The preaching took place in a large room in the Workhouse, next to the room in which the idiots and maniacs were confined.

My text was, "It is time to seek the Lord." I spoke on the importance of seeking the Lord, and the necessity of seeking Him *now*, without *delay;* and so far as I can recollect, the address was plain and practical, and free from anything peculiarly erroneous or offensive. Yet some of the persons that heard me said, I should have been more in my place in the *next* room,—that is, the room where the mad people were kept; which was another way of saying I was myself a maniac or idiot. Others, however, thought differently, I suppose.

The next time I preached was at Bramley, my native place. This was in July, nearly a year after I had joined the Methodist Society. I met with more encouragement here, and began to preach more regularly, at a variety of places; and on the recommendation of some that heard me, I was put upon the plan as a home missionary, or exhorter. The places that I visited were chiefly out-of-the-way country districts, where the regular preachers were not accustomed to go. One place was called Alcoats, another Broadlane, another Farnley Moor Side, another Armley Hill Top, another Sodom, or Little Moor Side, and there was also a number of smaller places. I spent a year or two in visiting those districts, along with a number of other young men, and preaching to the people who came to hear. I generally took a plain text, and my object in preaching was always, either to persuade sinners to repent and turn to God, or else to urge those who had given them-

selves to God to hold on and persevere to the end. The following were some of my texts: "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel;" "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall;" "Take heed therefore how ye hear;" "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned;" "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsels, and would none of my reproof: therefore will I laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh;" "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God;" "My Spirit shall not always strive with man;" "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;" "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Another text on which I preached was from the parable of the Supper, Matt. xxii.: "And he was speechless."

I went on preaching in this way for a length of time, taking fresh texts, and preparing fresh sermons. On one occasion I preached from "Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people: for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Another text from which I preached with much zeal was, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." The object of this discourse was to show the evil of loving money. The substance of the discourse was taken partly from the Bible, but chiefly from two

discourses of Bishop Beveridge's, and from the treatise of Baxter on the "Crucifixion of the World by the Cross of Christ," and from his "Christian Directory." I do not know how these sermons were received exactly. My manner and pronunciation would be against me. And in addition to that, the impression, probably, would often be, that I was treating on subjects to which I was unequal, on account of my youth. Many of my hearers would think that those subjects would be better left to older preachers, and some, I suppose, began to believe that I was a dangerous person to be placed in the pulpit. In truth, I had begun thus early to be a reformer.

Another subject on which I preached was John iii. 16: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Another of my texts was: "If it seem evil to you to serve the Lord, choose ye this day whom ye will serve."

Those were the principal texts on which I preached during the first three years of my labour as a preacher.

After preaching as a home missionary for perhaps two years, it was proposed at a local preachers' meeting, that I should come on the plan as a local preacher on trial. I was accordingly appointed to preach a trial sermon before one of the travelling preachers and two of the local preachers. I took for my text: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel unto every creature: he that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned."

I had at that time just been translating Grotius on "The Truth of the Christian Religion," and the subject was quite fresh upon my mind. And with translating the work first into English, and then back into Latin, I had got nearly the whole of the book, as well as the whole train of its reasoning, quite fixed in my memory. The work of Grotius, therefore, with some additions, amplifications, and curtailments, was the substance of my sermon. It was on a week-night that I preached this sermon, and in a private house at Kirkstall. It was preached to a very small company, and perhaps there was not one person in the room that disbelieved the gospel. The sermon, therefore, to say the least, was out of place. But it was a trial sermon; a sermon to be preached for the sake of affording my judges an opportunity of deciding whether I was qualified for a place on the local preachers' plan or not, and as such they ought to have regarded it, according to their own principle of requiring trial sermons. Their decision, however, was against me. They listened to the sermon with a great deal of amazement, and wondered greatly where the wonderful discourse had come from. None of them gave me credit for having made it myself, nor even for understanding the subject to which it was devoted. They had no objection to make to what was said; they considered the arguments were very conclusive and well arranged, and that the whole had been delivered with considerable freedom and ability; but they did not know whose the sermon was. The travelling preacher said

he supposed I had taken it from Paley. I said, No. He asked had I got it from Doddridge? I said, No. Where had I got it then? I told him that the plan of the sermon was my own, but that the substance of the arguments in proof of the truth of Christianity was from Grotius. However, I was not allowed to come upon the plan as a local preacher. About half-a-year, or a year after this, I was appointed to preach another trial sermon. The place in which I preached this time was the chapel at Farnley, and a travelling preacher, with some local preachers, were appointed to hear me. This time I preached from: "Say ye to the righteous, It shall be well with him," etc. The sermon was plain, the subject was familiar, and it was nothing but what they could believe was my own. I was approved this time, and my name was accordingly put upon the plan.

Either six or twelve months afterwards, I was appointed to preach another trial sermon, to afford them an opportunity of judging whether I was fit to come on the local preachers' plan in full connection. My text was "God so loved the world," etc. The place in which I preached was Bramley Methodist Chapel. The sermon generally gave great satisfaction, but on one point I was considered heterodox. I had stated, according to the common notion in those days, that one part of Christ's work was to make atonement to God for sin, or as it is generally expressed, to make satisfaction to Divine justice for man's sin. I observed, according to the common

notion, that in order to enable Christ to make satisfaction for sin, it was necessary that He should be both God and man; man that He might suffer the punishment due to transgression, and God that His divinity might stamp His sufferings with an infinity of merit. All this was considered right enough. But in speaking on this point I happened to say something which was not common, and this gave rise to a charge of heterodoxy. I said that a man, if innocent, might have redeemed one man, or made satisfaction to justice for one man; but that as one man was only equal to one man, a man could redeem no more than one, and that he could redeem that one only by suffering the self-same torments as were due to the sinner, and that for the full length of the period threatened by the broken law, viz., for all eternity. So also, I said, an angel, supposing an angel to be equal to man in dignity, and supposing the angel to have no sins of his own to answer for, might redeem one man; but he could only redeem him by sacrificing his own happiness, and submitting to bear the very same punishment due to the sinner, and that for all eternity; and that, I observed, would be no gain to the universe. The salvation of one would be the ruin of the other, and the number of the lost, and the amount of the torment endured, would remain the same. But Christ, I said, in consequence of His being both God and man united in one Person, could redeem all mankind, and redeem them too without either suffering the exact punishment

which had been threatened to the sinner, or suffering what He did suffer for ever and ever. In consequence of the connection of the divinity with the humanity, I said, a very small part of the punishment due to the wicked, and that small part endured but for a very short period, was equal, in worth to God, to all the sufferings due to the whole race of mankind, even if they had been inflicted without intermission, for ever and ever. What gave the offence in this passage, was the doctrine that man, or an angel, supposing him to be innocent, could satisfy Divine justice for any sin. I had overlooked, it seems, the principle that every sin committed against an infinite God, is infinite, and that one single sin does of itself require an infinite atonement, or an infinite satisfaction. When the case came before the quarterly meeting, I was objected to by the travelling preacher on that ground. He said the sentiment was neither Methodistical nor Scriptural. As I could not contend with the preacher, I said, I was not aware I had been saying anything wrong, but that if it was anti-methodistical and anti-scriptural I would not say so any more. With the understanding that I should examine the subject, and when I found that the notion was not Methodistical or Scriptural, I should lay it aside, I was received upon the plan.

CHAPTER VIII.

PREACHING LIFE CONTINUED—DECLINES TO GO OUT AS A TRAVELLING PREACHER FOR THE OLD CONNEXION—JOINS THE NEW CONNEXION.

I HAVE stated that I frequently met with discouragements from those amongst whom I went preaching. This, however, did not continue to be the case long. After awhile I began to meet with very different treatment. At the place where I had been told that I should have better become the next room, the room in which the lunatics were confined, I had become quite a favourite, and was frequently invited to visit them and preach to them when not appointed on the plan. My labours were more kindly received and more favourably regarded generally as I proceeded, and, in course of time, instead of being appointed merely to country places, to preach in private houses, I began to receive numerous appointments to the large chapels in the towns. Then many began to talk of proposing to me to go out as a travelling preacher. The first person who had suggested such a thing was Joseph Sutcliffe. He told me very early, as I have already

stated, that it was his impression I was to be a *divine.* He was wishful to have me out as a travelling preacher, while he remained in the Circuit, but I was too young; nor should I at that time have been considered fit for the work by the Circuit generally. He, therefore, never brought the matter publicly forward.

The preachers that followed Joseph Sutcliffe were old J—— F—— and J—— E——. John F—— was a great drunkard, and had so little control over himself, so little care of his reputation, so little management, that his drunkenness became generally known. His colleague, J—— E——, was far from being what he ought. These two preachers could not agree; they quarrelled greatly, and E—— took occasion to prosecute his Superintendent for drunkenness, and F—— was suspended. This made a disturbance in the Circuit. No business of any moment was in consequence attended to by the Circuit, and during the stay of these two preachers very little was said about my going out as a travelling preacher. Mr. Sutcliffe wrote to F—— about me, but he had enough to do to look after himself. The next two preachers that came were William Jackson and old William Harrison. By this time several in the Circuit had begun to express a wish that I should go out to travel, and Harrison, the Superintendent, came frequently to see me, and requested me to offer myself for the ministry amongst them. But it was now too late. I had found that none could be received as

travelling preachers unless they were willing to go to whatever part of the world the Conference or the Missionary Committee might think fit to send them, and unless they could express their willingness to be so disposed of before they went out. This I could not do. It was my conviction that God had called me to labour in my own country, and to do good amongst my own neighbours. I had no idea at that time that it was my duty to go to any foreign country to preach the Gospel, and I did not therefore feel at liberty to offer to go out on the terms required. On the contrary, I felt it would be wrong to expose myself to unseen dangers, and unknown trials and difficulties in foreign lands, without a conviction that God required it at my hands. I could not think I should be likely to succeed in missionary labours, unless I could enter on them with a belief that those were the labours for which God designed me. I considered that I should be likely to sink under missionary hardships and trials if exposed to them without a belief that God required me to do so.

But there was another hindrance to my entering what is called the ministry amongst the Wesleyan Methodists. I found that Conference had made a new law, establishing a new test of orthodoxy, and that no one could be taken out as a travelling preacher now, who could not subscribe to the doctrine of the Eternal Sonship, as taught by Richard Watson and Jabez Bunting, in opposition to Adam Clarke. This test I could not subscribe. I cannot say I altogether

disbelieved the doctrine of the Eternal Sonship; but I was not in a state of mind to justify me in subscribing the doctrine. I had not a firm belief in it: and this was reason enough why I could not subscribe it. This was the second hindrance to my becoming a travelling preacher. The next time the superintendent preacher came to request me to allow him to propose me as a travelling preacher, I told him my mind on those subjects. He seemed rather put about, and tried to help me over my difficulties. He told me that though Conference required every young person that went out as a preacher to place himself in their hands, to leave himself at their disposal, and to express his willingness to go to whatever part of the world they might choose to send him, yet Conference would not abuse its power, or send a man away from his native country when it was his conviction that he was not called upon by God to go. That if I offered myself as a preacher, and left myself in their hands, I should have no cause for complaint. I told him that what he said might all be true, but it did not remove the difficulty. The Conference might not abuse its power, but it would have the power,—and I could not place myself in its hands with a comfortable mind. I considered it my duty not to give away my liberty, whatever probability there might appear to be that no advantage would be taken of it. In a word I gave him to understand that however honest and well-intentioned the Conference and Missionary Committee might be, I did not feel free

to declare my willingness to go to any place out of my own country, and that unless I could be taken out without giving the declaration which they required, I must remain at home. I also told him how I stood with respect to the Eternal Sonship test. He tried to help me over that difficulty also, but the substance of all he said amounted only to this, that I should submit to those that were older and holier than myself. This of course had no influence over me. He frequently came after this to request me to offer myself for the ministry, and made use of various arguments to induce me to do so; but my mind was fixed,—I could not do it.

About this time, I was at James Sigston's school at Leeds, as a weekly boarder. While there the New Connexion of Methodists happened to have their Conference at Leeds, and one of my schoolfellows, called the Honourable Charles Van Linden, a youth from India, who was very fond of getting to know all that was passing in the town, and especially wishful to find out the peculiarities of the different religious denominations in the country, and who had a great delight in hearing all kind of preachers, got one of the Conference plans, and went to hear some of the New Connexion preachers. He told me where he had been, what he had discovered, and whom he had heard, and invited me to go along with him the next day. I went, and heard some of the New Connexion preachers, Simeon

Woodhouse, and James Dunkerley, and someone else. In the evening I attended a meeting at which the young preachers that had finished their probation were received into full connexion. I heard them tell their experience, declare their belief with respect to matters of doctrine, and their views on the subject of Church government. I recollect, especially, that some of them spoke a good deal about an equilibrium of power in the Connexion, the rights and liberties of the people, etc. This was all new to me, and I did not, at first, understand it. Curious as it may seem, I was not aware at this time that there was any such thing in existence as a regular system of Church government. I had no idea there was any such thing as Church government in connection with the Methodist Society, and had never thought about it. And as to equilibrium of power, and rights of the people, it was all a mystery to me.

A short time after this, one of my companions bought a volume of a Methodist Magazine, supposing it to be a volume of the Old Connexion Magazine It turned out, however, to be a volume of the New Connexion Magazine. In this volume there was a rather full account of the history and the constitution of the New Connexion, with a lengthy and laboured defence of its principles of Church government. At the end of the volume there was bound up with it a discourse by Thomas Allin, and some other articles bearing on the same subject. This volume opened quite a new world to me and my companion. We

read with a great deal of interest what was said in reference to the New Connexion, and talked over the subject of its history and constitution very freely and frequently between ourselves. If I had not read anything on Church History before, I certainly began to read on that subject now; and what I read both in common and ecclesiastical history assisted me in understanding what I met with in the Magazine and in the other publications on the subject of Methodistical Church government.

The consequence of my reading and thinking and talking on these subjects was, that I began to think the Old Connexion all wrong. The preachers, the rules, the constitution of the district meetings and conferences, seemed all unscriptural and tyrannical. I began to pay more attention to what I heard from the pulpits, and to compare the preaching of the travelling preachers with the doctrine of the New Testament. When I attended missionary meetings, I became more and more disgusted with the speeches that I heard, with the everlasting begging, and the vulgar jests, and the low humour, which were employed to please the people, and to dispose them to contribute their money. My mind was in consequence greatly alienated from the Connexion. I could no longer labour with comfort. I had lost all sympathy with the ruling portion of the body. I no longer felt any great interest in its prosperity. I could not pray, as I had been wont to do, for a Methodistical revival. I stated my feelings to

someone, who soon made them known to others, and it was considered such an awful thing that I could not pray for God to revive His work in the body. I was supposed by many to have fallen entirely. The Methodists, generally, had no idea that religion could spread or souls be saved by any other means than Methodistical revivals; so they concluded, I suppose, that I was opposed to the spread of religion altogether. This, however, was not the case.

I was also somewhat concerned on my own account. I thought that God intended me for a travelling preacher, and in truth I wished to be one. I was very desirous of knowledge, and wished to be a scholar; I desired to be a travelling preacher in order that my whole time might be devoted to reading and the like. This, I have no doubt, was one thing which led me to turn my attention the more readily and thoughtfully to the New Connexion. My feelings at this time were often very painful and trying. Many a time did I lie waking on my bed hours together, amid the silence and darkness of night, pondering those matters in my mind, thinking what course to pursue, and wondering what would be the result. One night I recollect well, while laying awake, I felt as if the point were settled, and I said, "I shall do something to-morrow that will make a stir;" and so it proved. Wearied with doubts and anxieties, I had at length formed the purpose to leave the Old Connexion, and, if I met with encouragements, to join the New Connexion. I

told my purpose to one of my companions, and he approved of it. We went to Leeds that day, and heard Richard Watson preach a missionary sermon, and attended a missionary meeting in Brunswick Chapel. I was not much displeased with Watson's sermon, but with the missionary meeting I was very much dissatisfied. The falsehoods and the follies put forth were utterly disgusting, and before it was quite over I left, and went along with my companion in search of the New Connexion Superintendent preacher. We found his house, and he invited us in, and bade us be seated. We opened our errand, and he talked to us rather freely, and before we left, we got a copy of the New Connexion general rules. We read and examined the rules, and thought very favourably of them. We examined the doctrines, and found little or nothing to blame, with the exception of one or two words or phrases. The doctrines were almost all expressed in Scripture language, and plainly designed to allow of considerable variety of opinion. There was nothing about the Trinity, or about justification by faith alone, or the direct witness of the Spirit. The doctrines of justification, the witness of the Spirit, and the atonement, were left almost entirely in Scripture language, without any Methodistical or Calvinistic additions.

I was now more fixed than ever in my determination to join the New Connexion, and my companion was the same. So we went again to see the New Connexion superintendent preacher,

with the purpose of offering ourselves as members. The preacher we had first seen, W. Ford, had left, and another, Thomas Styan, had come in his place. He was a surly sort of man, and seemed, at the time we called, to be in a rather uncomfortable state of mind. The Connexion, or the Conference, had not pleased him; and though there was not a particle of the reformer about him, he was disposed to complain of the Connexion. He rather dissuaded us from joining the Connexion than otherwise; but we were not to be so soon discouraged. Some of the lay members of the New Connexion got to know that two persons had been visiting their preachers, and offering themselves as members, and they sought us out, and treated us very kindly. Through their instrumentality we got introduced to other members, and it was not long before we were invited to preach among them. I preached for them once or twice in Ebenezer Chapel, Leeds, and met with very great encouragement from them.

I had not preached long amongst my new friends, before some of them were desirous that I should go out as a travelling preacher amongst them. To this I had no serious objections, though I had in part made arrangements for settling in another way of life. I was given to understand that I should have perfect liberty of judgment, of speech, and of action in the body,—that the New Testament was their sole creed and law,—that if a person believed the New Testament and lived aright, he was a suit-

able person for membership, and if, in addition to this, his abilities were sufficient, he was qualified for the ministry amongst them. I also found that the perfection of the Scriptures, both as a rule of faith and as a rule of life, was one of the first articles in the New Connexion creed or confession of faith, and was also given to understand that though the works of John Wesley and Fletcher were referred to in the general rules for a further explanation of the doctrines laid down in their confession of faith, they were referred to simply as an explanation, and not as a standard of orthodoxy,—that each preacher was at liberty to receive and interpret every article according to his own views of the doctrine taught in the New Testament, and that he was to use Wesley's and Fletcher's writings, not as authorities, but simply as helps to his understanding,—not as fetters to enslave his mind, but as a means to enlarge his knowledge, his freedom, and to increase his spiritual strength and independence. Liberty was the great subject of conversation in every circle in the New Connexion. It was the great object of my search and of my wishes, and I believed assuredly that I had at length found all that my soul had sighed and sought after.

I did not, however, meet with everything in the New Connexion I could have wished. I thought I saw a great lack of hearty religion and real Christian excellence. I also soon found that the travelling preachers were not on good terms amongst themselves,—that the Superintendents were jealous

of those that were younger, and represented their younger brethren as lacking in point of respect for them, and as proud, and wishful to be above their proper place. I also found in the Connexion a complete division between the rich members and the poor members. The rich were a class, or a caste, to themselves, and the poor were another class, or caste. The rich, along with the travelling preachers, formed one world; the poor, left all alone, formed another world; and between the two there seemed to be a great gulf fixed, so that those who lived in the poor world could hardly pass to those that lived in the rich one; and those that lived in the rich world would seldom pass to those who lived in the poor world, except to make collections among them. The rich met at each other's houses; they had their regular parties, many of which were very extravagant and expensive: while the poor were completely lost sight of, as though they belonged to another race of beings, except when a poor person happened to become a preacher among them. The conversation at these parties was seldom, if ever, on any literary, intellectual, or philanthropic subject; it was seldom instructive or edifying in any way. Sometimes the conversation would turn upon something connected with religion, but the subject would generally be the excellency of the New Connexion system of Church government over that of the Old Connexion, or accounts of some additions to the body from the Old Connexion. Nothing seemed to give greater

pleasure generally to those parties, than tidings of disturbances or of probable divisions in the Wesleyan body. Party politics and slander, and mere formal foolish talking, talking for talking's sake, with eating, drinking, smoking, and occasional singing and playing on the piano, formed the whole business of these parties. They used to conclude with prayer sometimes, when the travelling preacher was there, but not otherwise. These things shocked me a great deal at first, but with being frequently invited to those parties, and having a great deal of respect and attention paid to me, my dislike of them partially subsided. I also entertained a hope, that, as the New Connexion system was good, all those evils might be removed in course of time, if suitable efforts were made.

About this time I got introduced to John Henshaw, the younger preacher in the Leeds Circuit, who lived at Ripon, a distant branch of the Leeds Circuit. I found him a person both of considerable intelligence and earnest piety. He encouraged me in the pursuit of truth, and was evidently wishful to open my way to extensive usefulness. He was very communicative, glad to give any information he possessed, and equally well pleased to listen to others if they had any information to give in return. It is a curious fact, that though a great revivalist, and a very grave and solemn man when engaged in his religious duties, as they are called, he was quite another person among his particular friends. He was exceedingly

fond of "Don Quixote," and some other similar productions, and strongly recommended them to me. And he delighted in ridiculous stories. One hour he would be preaching with all the horror and solemnity imaginable about the eternal and infinite torments of the damned, and then in an hour or two he would be laughing at a ridiculous story, as if his sides could hardly hold him together. I received, however, some benefit from my intercourse with him. He introduced me to an acquaintance with some fresh books, both on divinity and history. He was very fond of Boswell's "Life of Johnson," and of his "Lives of the Poets," both of which works I read by his recommendation. "Don Quixote" I never did read. The only reason which he gave for recommending the work to me, was that it would make me laugh in spite of myself; and as I had no particular wish to be made to laugh beyond my usual measure, I never troubled myself to procure the book.

After John Henshaw left Leeds, he was stationed at Nottingham. Though a very lively man, he was not robust, and it was not long after his removal to Nottingham before his constitution began to fail, and he was obliged to have someone to assist him in his labours for a short time. He wrote requesting me to go and assist him, and being urged by the advice of some of the friends in Leeds to go, I went. I preached for him at Nottingham, Beeston, Derby, and some other places in the Circuit; but before the end of a fortnight a letter came to Leeds, and through

the friends at Leeds to me, requesting that I should be sent to Liverpool to supply the place of a preacher there that had resigned or been set aside; and as my friends, both at Nottingham and Leeds, concurred in urging me to go to Liverpool, I went. I travelled by coach from Nottingham, through Derby, Bakewell, Matlock, Buxton, Stockport, and Manchester to Liverpool in one day. Thomas Allin was the superintendent preacher in the Liverpool Circuit at that time, and to him I was directed to go. I found my way to his house without much difficulty, and he received me very kindly. On the Sunday following I commenced my labours as a supply. I went very comfortably through my work for two or three weeks, and met with every encouragement from the leading friends in the Church and congregation; but after a while I began to find myself in serious difficulties. Thomas Allin was at that time the most popular preacher in the Methodist New Connexion: he was supposed to have neither equal nor resemblance in the whole body. I was comparatively ignorant and unpractised in the art of preaching; there were only five or six sermons, in fact, that I was able to preach with perfect ease and confidence. I had preached a-many more, but had not preached them sufficiently often to have them perfectly at command, so as to be ready to preach them without fear or embarrassment. And there were only two chapels in the town, and the town was the whole Circuit. Several of those who attended one chapel one part of the day, attended the

other chapel the other part of the day, so that it was very uncomfortable and difficult to preach the same sermon twice over. Then there was preaching on the week-night in the principal chapel twice every week. The consequence was, that in about a fortnight or three weeks, my ready, familiar sermons were all preached, and I was obliged to begin with those that were neither so much at my command, nor so good in themselves as the others; and this was a very great trial to me. Many a time did I preach in complete agony. No one can tell the anguish I endured at times, especially in the pulpit. After a while, however, I gained a little more confidence, and went on with more satisfaction, partly in consequence of the Superintendent speaking to me very kindly, and giving me favourable accounts of the reception of my labours among the people, and also in consequence of some of the people giving me great encouragement.

But, alas! after a while I was run down again. The stock of preaching materials at my command seemed to be almost exhausted. There were only certain kinds of subjects which I had at that time confidence sufficient to bring before the people, and these subjects had been brought before them once. And it was painful to me beyond measure to be obliged to use over again the same materials, and to repeat before the people the same sentiments. I could have got plenty of skeletons and sketches of sermons, and could easily have prepared them for

the pulpit and preached them; but could not persuade myself to do that. I was unwilling to tell the people anything but what I really knew and felt, or what had become my own by serious reflection and by a clear perception of its truth. And not only so: I felt unwilling to deliver sermons which did not appear to have a direct and special adaptation to the wants and circumstances of the congregation to which I had to preach. Such sermons were not at my command, and as I was expected to preach the usual number of times, and the usual length of time, it distracted me beyond measure. How I got through these trials I cannot tell. I was, however, enabled to get through the year in some way; and oh, how glad I was when I obtained permission from the Quarterly Meeting to leave the Circuit a single Sunday before my time was expired!

CHAPTER IX.

GOES OUT AS A TRAVELLING PREACHER—HANLEY CIRCUIT—FALLS IN LOVE—HALIFAX CIRCUIT—GETS MARRIED, AND IS REPRIMANDED BY CONFERENCE—BLYTH CIRCUIT—NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

THE Liverpool Circuit recommended me to go out as a travelling preacher on trial, and the Conference received their recommendation, and stationed me at Hanley, in the Staffordshire Potteries. The Conference was held at Halifax, Yorkshire. I was present at Halifax during a considerable part of the time, and preached in the Halifax Chapel one Sunday morning, in the place of one of the Conference preachers. H. Ridgway, who was the delegate to the Conference from the Hanley Circuit, heard me, and was so well pleased with the discourse, that he requested to have me stationed in their Circuit. I reached Hanley a week or so after Conference.

There had been no provision made for me, nor was there any friend waiting to receive me; so I went and took lodgings at the King's Head Inn. I found

next day that my house was to be at Newcastle-under-Lyne; but it was some time before the place was ready for me. The superintendent preacher was T—— W——.

I met with a great deal of encouragement in this Circuit generally. I had large congregations, and the people appeared satisfied with my labours, and many professed to be profited by them. I was also invited to preach occasional sermons at Cheadle, Lane End, and in the Dawley Green Circuit. But this exposed me to difficulties which I had scarcely looked for. My Superintendent, T—— W——, was jealous and envious, and so was his wife. They could not bear to see another, especially a younger preacher, have larger congregations than the Superintendent, and began to conduct themselves towards me in a very unpleasant way indeed. Both used their influence amongst the people to prejudice them against me. They tried to find something that they might circulate to my disadvantage. He told people I was idle, and spent my time in gossiping instead of spending it in study. He one day went to the house where I lodged, at Newcastle-under-Lyne, in my absence, went into my room and examined my books and papers, and took account of a number of books that he considered were of an objectionable character, and such as *he* thought a young preacher ought not to use. Amongst the rest he had found the works of Lord Byron and the works of Shakespeare, and some also of a theological character which he

considered objectionable. He said nothing to me about these books, but went at once to such as he thought had the most influence in the Circuit, and told his discoveries to them. A meeting was called of some of the leading persons in the Circuit, and I was summoned to attend. The possession of these objectionable books was the principal subject on which they spoke to me. They talked about the danger of such works, and told me that my business was to be a Methodist preacher, and that I had nothing to do with any books but those that would qualify me for teaching, inculcating, and defending Methodistical doctrines, and for exercising Methodistical discipline in the Societies. They advised me, by all means, to be sure and get rid of them as soon as I could. I did not, at that time, think their advice was good, and I therefore retained my books, and went on my way as before.

The superintendent preacher still continued his labours to injure me in the estimation of the people, and to a considerable extent he succeeded, especially at Newcastle-under-Lyne. An attempt was made, at his instigation, by a number of the Newcastle people, to prevent me from having a perfect certificate, but it failed. My certificate was perfect, and I left the Circuit with the affection and esteem, as well as with the best wishes, of nearly the whole of the people.

I left Newcastle-under-Lyne with very peculiar and painful feelings. The first Sunday I preached

there, one person in the congregation had attracted my attention more than the rest, though I did not then know who she was. When going from the chapel to my lodgings, I saw the same person passing through the Theatre Square amongst a crowd of others, who were all leaving the chapel and returning to their homes, and I went and shook hands with her, and spoke to her. The thought struck me at the time, Suppose that female should become my wife. I had no acquaintance with her for a length of time after, but she did become my wife sure enough. I had become exceedingly attached to her; and had made known my wish that she should be my wife. My knowledge of her had led me to form a very high opinion of her worth, and to entertain for her a kind or degree of affection that I had never felt before, and of which, in fact, I had never formed any conception. I parted from her reluctantly and sorrowfully enough, but had no alternative. I could not yet be married according to the rules of the Connexion, and had, besides, no sufficient means of providing for the comfort of my wife. I was obliged, therefore, to submit to my sorrowful lot.

The Conference stationed me at Halifax, in Yorkshire. The interval between leaving Staffordshire and going to Halifax, was spent with my parents and friends at Bramley; but I passed the time in great sadness and anxiety. I was glad, to be sure, to be once more in the circle of my friends, and to throw my eyes over the scenes of my childhood and early

youth ; but my heart was far away. Another affection had taken possession of my soul, which had swallowed up all others. What pleased me, pleased me only for a moment, and then my thoughts were clustering round the object of my affections in the scenes that I had left.

At length I removed to my Circuit. Simeon Woodhouse and Thomas Batty were my colleagues. Simeon Woodhouse was rather fond of reading, and he was a tolerable preacher too. Compared with many he might be called a good preacher. He had collected a considerable amount of knowledge, such as it was ; but it was chiefly a knowledge of curious and little things. He had nothing like largeness of soul, nor anything like a comprehensive view of religious and general truth. He had not a thought of learning anything more than what was contained in his creed, and seemed to suppose that no one else should ever think of learning more. A Methodist preacher, in his judgment, should take the creed and the discipline of the Connexion just as he found them, swallow them whole, and never dream of altering or mending them in the least. He was, at the same time, a man of considerable kindness, and, I should judge, a man of order, of temperance, of truth, and of integrity. I occasionally gave Simeon a good deal of trouble. I had begun, before this, to think about religious matters myself very seriously. I had been led to suspect the truth of several notions that were generally considered orthodox and evangelical, and considerably to modify

my views on other subjects. With respect to my style and way of speaking, I had altered it almost altogether, so that it had ceased, to a very great extent, to resemble the common theological and Methodistical dialect. Many words and phrases in common use among Methodists and other orthodox professors I had entirely laid aside, and others had been greatly modified. There were many things which it was customary for the preachers to take for granted in their sermons and conversation, that I thought without foundation in the Scriptures; and when Simeon would be talking with me, I was frequently unable to say "Yes," when he expected me to do so, and sometimes I was obliged to say "No," instead of "Yes." This instantly excited his displeasure; and his face would colour, and his eyes look strange, and he would seem as though he considered it the most fearful offence imaginable for a man to object to any of the prevailing notions or customary expressions about religion. Still his anger would generally subside pretty quickly, and he bore with me, on the whole, tolerably well. I never found that he tried privately to prejudice people against me.

Thomas Batty, my other colleague, was a very curious kind of man. Though a preacher, and with some people a very popular preacher, yet he hardly seemed to have intellect sufficient to make him accountable either for what he said or for what he did. He was one of the most ridiculous talkers and preachers that I ever heard. His sermons were just

as they happened to be; sometimes he preached tolerably well, but at other times his discourses were the most ridiculous, nonsensical things imaginable. I heard him three or four times myself. One night he was talking about fire, and trying to prove that fire would burn. He mentioned several fires spoken of in the Bible that burned, such as the fire that overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, the fire that formed one of the plagues of Egypt, but at last, poor man, all unexpectedly, he stumbled upon the fire that enveloped the burning bush, and found it recorded that the bush did *not* burn! How he got over the difficulty I do not exactly recollect; but he either got over it or slipped by it in some way. Then he talked about the fire at Moscow, and added that the flame of the burning city was so great and so high, that we might have seen it even into England, had it not been for the hills. And a lot of such talk as that formed the chief part of his sermon. I heard him again another week evening. He was not aware I was there. I was sitting in the gallery, which was not lighted, so that he could not see me. He seemed to be showing off wonderfully that night; but his sermon was such nonsense, such a jumble of absurdity and folly, that it seemed a mystery to me how anybody could be so ignorant or so reckless as to talk such things; and it seemed a still greater mystery that people should be found willing to go from time to time to listen to such effusions.

The Circuit was rather prosperous during the year.

The congregations were good, and the societies increased in numbers, and the leaders' meetings, quarterly meetings, and local preachers' meetings were peaceable, and all things went on tolerably well. But during the former part of my residence there, I was very much occupied. My thoughts were fixed on a distant object, and I had no means, except by letter, of communicating with that object. I believed the person to whom I was engaged was designed by Providence to be my wife; and was wishful, on more accounts than one, to take her away from the place where she lived, and have her for my partner and companion. But the laws of the Connexion were against me, and difficulties lay in the way, arising from the prejudices of the people against any person that married before the time of his probation was concluded. Still I had good reasons for wishing to be married. One reason was, the inconvenience I found in being obliged to live in other people's houses. I was completely tired of that kind of life, and not without good reason. A great part of the time I lived in Liverpool, it is true, was with decent people, but still I was very far from being comfortable. In Staffordshire, my lodgings were not much better; in some respects they were much worse. The people were very disagreeable. At Halifax I had more comfortable lodgings. The people were very kind and free, the apartments also were far superior to those I occupied at Liverpool and in Staffordshire, and the family seemed to take delight in making me

comfortable. Still they wanted me to be comfortable in their own way. They wanted me to throw away my own dispositions and habits, and take up theirs. They wanted me to cease to be myself, and to become something else, — a being quite different. And this I could not do. I could not even make the attempt to be anybody but myself. If I liked a thing, I said so, whether they professed to like it or not; and if I did not like a thing, I would not say that I did, whoever else might. If their pleasures pleased me, I would share them, not else; if mine pleased them, all the better; but if not, I felt no inclination to give them up. I liked to do as I pleased, or what I thought most reasonable, and not to act a part unnatural for anybody's pleasure. And this my host and hostess did not like. Still, if I had gone to these lodgings when I went out at first, I might have been comfortable in them; but at that time I felt I could not be comfortable in anyone's house but my own. These matters, and others of a like nature, made me resolve that, whatever was the consequence, I would have done with that kind of life as soon as possible, and have a home and household of my own. I resolved, therefore, at length to be married, and about twenty weeks after Conference, I did marry. I took a house and furnished it, and had a home of my own. And now I believed myself happy, and I was happy.

The New Connexion had a law against preachers getting married until they had either finished their

probation, which never lasted less than four years, and which sometimes lasted five or six more, unless they could obtain special leave from the Annual Committee or the Conference. One of the reasons assigned for this law was the necessity of young men giving themselves up wholly to the improvement of their minds by study and the like. It was intimated in the rules that after young preachers got married, they would not be able to attend to their studies so closely, or to make improvement so rapidly. I, however, found it quite otherwise. I proved the reason assigned for limiting the preachers' liberty to be a false one, so far as my own case was concerned. I studied more closely, and improved more rapidly after my marriage than I had ever done before. And I studied with far greater pleasure too. I might have more cares, but I had many more comforts. I might have some new difficulties to contend with, but I had many more advantages. app

During the remainder of my stay at Halifax, I gave myself more diligently to reading and writing than I had been accustomed to do; and the consequence was, I made considerable improvement, both in knowledge and in other things. Amongst the works I read while at Halifax were the writings of Robert Fellowes, Flavel, Abraham Booth, Thomas Watson, and a great many books which I had bought during my residence at Liverpool. Most of these I found to be worthless, and, after writing my disapprobation of different parts of them on the margin

of the books, devoted them to destruction, except a few which were given to a bookseller in exchange for other works. Still, though those books were worthless, the time spent in reading them was not lost. They furnished excellent exercise for my reasoning faculties. In exposing their errors, I often made discoveries of truth. In writing down my criticisms on the works, I was improving both my powers of thought and discrimination, and my powers of utterance too. I was, without knowing it, becoming a critic and an author. I was correcting my own style, detecting my own errors, enlarging my own capacity of thought, and preparing myself for future usefulness. Indeed, it is hard to say whether I have got more good from true, good books, or from false and foolish books.

The next Conference was at Hull. At this Conference a complaint was made against me for having broken the law of the Connexion by getting married during my probation without the leave of Conference, and the Conference put me a year back on my probation, as a punishment. They never wrote to me for any explanation, nor invited me to attend to answer for myself. I never even heard that a complaint had been made against me on the subject until I received information of the punishment. I was accused, tried, and condemned all in my absence. This was the more unjust, as it so happened that I had not in reality broken the law; at least I had not, as they supposed, broken a law which I had promised to keep.

When I went out as a preacher, I refused to give my pledge on the subject of marriage. But if I even had given a pledge, it would only have been a pledge to obey the law then in existence. Whereas, before I was married, the law was altered, and another kind of pledge adopted to which I was no party. The pledge which I had been requested to give, but which, in truth, had not been given, was now abolished. I had not, therefore, either broken an engagement or disobeyed the law under which I had gone out as a preacher. Yet Conference punished me. And besides putting me back a year, they transported me to Blyth, in the Newcastle Circuit, a distance of one hundred and thirty miles.

I felt very much dissatisfied with my appointment, and was very reluctant to submit to it, but there seemed no alternative: go I must. I therefore set to work to make the best of my trials. We packed up our furniture and sent it off, and then set off ourselves. On our way we called at Bramley, my native place. There my wife was taken very unwell for a length of time, and doubts began to be entertained both by the doctor and my own relations, that she would not recover. This was a greater trial still. I was, of course, unable to proceed to my Circuit; I could not entertain the thought of leaving my wife until there appeared to be some signs of improvement. This brought on another trial. The people in the Circuit were grieved that they could not have their preacher as soon as they expected, and prepared to receive me,

when I should arrive, with rebukes and frowns, and ill nature. At length my wife began to improve. The journey did her good instead of harm. A violent cough that she had gave way in the course of a few hours through the change of air, and by the time we reached Stockton-on-Tees she was both relieved in her chest, and revived in her system generally.

Though stationed at Blyth, we stopped a short time at Newcastle-upon-Tyne. My labours happened to be in that part of the Circuit at the time we arrived at Newcastle. As soon as an opportunity occurred, I went over to Blyth to take a house, but could not find one unoccupied in the whole town. I however succeeded in obtaining some rooms at length, and glad I was.

The first text I preached from at Blyth, was Isa. iii. 10, 11: "Say ye to the righteous, it shall be well with him; for he shall eat the fruit of his doings." The discourse was very well received, and it appeared to have a very good effect upon the congregation. But I confess I preached the sermon as much for myself as for the people, and perhaps its principal effect was upon my own mind. I was very much comforted while speaking of the wisdom and goodness of God's providence,—of the assurance given us that all things work together for good to them that love God,—that all the changes in our earthly lot are under the direction of our heavenly Father, and that the painful, the dark, and the threatening, as well as the joyous, and bright, and promising, are

all intended by God to promote our improvement and perfection, and our blessedness.

After I had taken rooms, preached my sermon, and made all needful arrangements, I returned from Blyth to Newcastle-on-Tyne to fetch my wife, and in a few days we took up our residence at Blyth. I found the people at Blyth, generally speaking, a kind-hearted and well-disposed people, and enjoyed much comfort in their fellowship. But they were not all alike. One was grieved that the young preacher did not live at her house; another was jealous, and afraid that the new preacher would not be as pliant in his hands as the former one had been; still the people, generally, were affectionate and loving, and delighted to contribute to our comfort. I preached regularly two Sundays in four at Blyth, and spent the other two Sundays in Newcastle and the surrounding villages. We received only about forty pounds a year from the Circuit, so that we were somewhat straitened in our circumstances in consequence. We had, besides, to meet many extra expenses. But I never went into debt, and never asked a favour from any one, nor did I ever complain of poverty or hardship. This, of course, was owing, in a great measure, to the economy of my wife, who understood, as well as most good wives, how to create a great deal of comfort out of a scanty supply of materials. My kind parents also supplied me with clothes, which lightened the burden we had to bear.

My labours at Blyth were rendered very useful.

The Society was about doubled in its numbers, and all things went on prosperously. Many young persons were brought to begin to be religious, and some, rather advanced in years, were also led to embrace religion. The people generally were improved in knowledge and in character. The influence exerted upon the congregation and the neighbourhood generally, by the principles which I inculcated, was of a truly beneficial character. It was a great trial to me to be removed from Halifax and sent so far away into a strange and unknown district. I considered my removal from Halifax, and appointment to Newcastle-on-Tyne, as one of the most painful events I had met with then, and continued to regard it and to feel it a great trial for a length of time. It was nevertheless overruled for my good, and I have since been led to look upon it, on many accounts, as one of the greatest blessings of my life. For one thing, I met with a great many books at Newcastle I had never read before, which afforded me a great deal of instruction. Among them were the works of Dr. Campbell, his preliminary dissertations on the Four Gospels, his translation of the Gospels, his discourse on miracles, and other discourses on important subjects, and his work on pulpit eloquence and systematic divinity. These I read with a great deal of pleasure. I both received much instruction from them, and was greatly confirmed in many of the opinions I had been previously led to entertain.

Another work I read with some interest was Butler's "Analogy of Religion," and his "Discourses on Benevolence," etc. I also read Foster's Essays on "Decision of Character," on the application of the epithet "Romantic," and some of the causes why men of learning and taste rejected or neglected the religion of Christ. I was pleased with all these works, and especially with Campbell's and Foster's.

I met with another treat at Newcastle-on-Tyne, greater than all; it was the library of Doctor Tomlinson, of St. Nicholas' Church, consisting of from five to ten thousand volumes, on all subjects bearing on the history, the doctrines, the character, the evidences, and the tendency of the religion of Christ. The library contained the works of authors of all varieties of opinion, whether infidel or Christian, orthodox or heterodox, Papist or Protestant, Dissenters or Church of England men. This library was public property, and was open to the public three or four days almost every week. I went to it frequently when on the Newcastle side of the Circuit. I used to go there in the morning as often as possible, and spend the greater part of the day in looking over the books, reading such as appeared likely to give me the information I was seeking, and often making extracts from them. Among the works I met with there were several of Baxter's which I had never seen before, the works of Cudworth, Locke, Newton, Whitley, Moore, Burnett, Norris, Tindal, Mead, Chubb, Machiavel, Goodwin, Hobbes, Milton, and a great many others

I cannot now enumerate. I had an opportunity of satisfying myself, while reading those works, with respect to a great many points of controversial theology and Church history, on which my mind had been long in suspense. One effect which my reading in this library produced, in addition to storing my mind with a great variety of information, was, to make me resolve to be free. That measure of bondage in which I saw myself placed in the New Connexion began to be exceedingly irksome to me, and I felt strongly inclined to throw off the yoke and to assert my liberty. I then resolved to attempt the reformation of the Connexion, and the hope sprang up in my breast that I might in time secure to myself in the Connexion the liberty that my soul required. I had been taught that liberty was the distinguishing principle of the body, and was promised, when first received into the body at Leeds, all the liberty that a Christian could enjoy; and I would try if that liberty could not be secured. I would endeavour to bring the Connexion to carry out the principles of liberty to their full and proper extent. I soon found, however, that this could not be done without subjecting myself to great inconveniences. I began to think of publishing a penny periodical for the expression of my sentiments. From conversations, however, with some of the preachers and leading members of the Connexion, I was led to conclude that little or nothing new could be published without great opposition and disturbance,—that if I published my

sentiments in my own name, I must expect persecution and perhaps expulsion from the body. Though the Connexion had been founded on the principle of liberty, it was plain that its rulers were not prepared to allow its members to act on that principle, unless they could do so without endangering the reputation of the Connexion, and that, it was plain, was impossible. I was led, in consequence, to postpone for a time the commencement of my periodical.

It was while stationed at Newcastle-on-Tyne that Joseph Barker first began to be distinguished for those remarkable talents of which he was undoubtedly possessed. A writer in the *Newcastle Chronicle* at the time of his decease, speaking of this period of his career, says: "His remarkable and general ability in the pulpit soon obtained for him great popularity, and his services as a preacher were highly esteemed and in much request. About the year 1842 he became minister of the Hood Street Chapel, now the Central Hall, in this town, where a congregation of the Methodist New Connexion body then worshipped. Here his forcible and attractive preaching excited much attention, and drew large audiences."

Under this growing popularity, his love of liberty and impatience of control began to manifest themselves more strongly. This was particularly the case in regard to his marriage. He was engaged, and wished to get married at once, and the object of his affection was as ready to be married as himself.

The Circuit was not going to be put to any additional expense or trouble, so he neither felt disposed to recognise the rules of the Connexion, nor ask the sanction of Conference to the step, but simply ignored both.

The lady of his choice was of a respectable, and well-educated Staffordshire family, of the name of Salt. She was a woman of exemplary character, amiable disposition, and engaging manners. Her native place was Betley, and on the death of her parents she became possessed of a small independency. She accompanied her husband through the whole of his wanderings both in England and America, through dangers and trials of no ordinary character, with a noble devotion, calm and temperate in prosperity, and unshaken by adversity. She died during her husband's last visit to England, and was interred at Nottingham, where they were then residing.

CHAPTER X.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—THOMAS SNOWDON.

THERE were several of the members at Newcastle-on-Tyne and in the surrounding societies, who were not so kind and well-disposed as the Blyth people. Several of them seemed to take pleasure in crossing and trying the feelings of their young preacher. Amongst the worst of that class was Thomas Snowdon, an old local preacher, leader, and trustee. The first interview I had with him, he took occasion to insult me respecting my marriage, and also gave me to understand that he should expect me to be in perfect subjection to him if I wished to enjoy much peace or comfort in the Circuit. It fell to my lot to be lodged and boarded for part of my time at this man's house, and to show his spirit and manner of proceeding, I may give the following :—

It was Mr. Snowdon's custom to read a portion of the Scriptures to his family every morning, and as he passed along make comments on what he read. When I was there, he would frequently stop in his readings and comments to ask my opinion, and seemed to expect that I must always concur,

in what he said. However, at times I was obliged to dissent from his sayings, and then would follow a little controversy. Those controversies were never very profitable, in consequence of his constant determination or desire to force his own opinions on myself, and to extort from me assent to his whimsical and foolish observations. Yet he still continued to force those controversies. He also took upon himself the office of perpetual censurer of my discourses. His censures, however, were generally proportioned to the goodness of the discourse. If I happened to be particularly at liberty, and preach better than usual, he would blame almost everything. If I preached indifferently, he would censure less; and if I preached poorly, if I were embarrassed in my discourse, and seemed troubled and sad on that account, he would scarcely censure at all. Then the things which he censured would be sure to be the best and truest parts of my sermon. And this was the way in which he acted in almost all things.

On one occasion we had nearly quarrelled. He had tried me until I could keep silence no longer, so I told him exactly what I thought about his manner of proceeding; and spoke so plainly that both he and his wife were seriously put about. Soon after that, upon my visiting the Newcastle side of the Circuit, I found that the people at whose house it was my custom to sleep, had gone off, and closed the house, so that I was obliged to look out for other

lodgings for a while. I went directly to Mr. Snowdon's. He was the principal man in the Newcastle Circuit, and it was his place to see me properly provided for while on that side of the Circuit. His wife seemed astonished when I entered the house; but I told her how the matter stood, and added that I did not feel disposed to go, at that time of the night (for it was getting rather late), to any other lodging; so hoped she would give me a bed. I also said that unless accommodated with a bed there, I would at once return to Blyth. She said, "I should always be glad to see you, and to give you either bed or anything else, if you would not disagree and dispute so with our master." I replied, "It is your master that will disagree and dispute with me. I should be quiet enough if he would let me alone. I never force my opinions upon him; it is only when he attempts to force his opinions upon me that I ever make any objections to what he says. You must yourself have seen that he will neither allow me to be silent, nor allow me quietly to speak my mind; that he will oblige me to speak, and yet always finds fault with what I say, if at variance with what he says." She acknowledged that her husband was rather queer in that respect, but still thought I might manage a great deal better with him if I would. I told her I had done my best, and that it was all to no purpose. "He will ask my opinion," said I, "on every subject that comes into his head, and then begin to complain whenever my opinion happens to

differ from his." I also added, that I thought he sometimes disputed with me merely for the sake of disputing, and contradicted me, not because he thought I was wrong, but because he thought it would be too much of a compliment to acknowledge that he agreed with me on any subject. She thought I was too severe upon him. I said, "Well, just wait and see to-night, and if it is not as I have said, you shall blame me as much as you like, and I will acknowledge myself in error." Almost immediately Mr. Snowdon came in. "What are you doing here to-night?" said he. "I have come to sleep here," I replied; "and more than that, I must sleep here, or else return to Blyth. Mr. G——'s house is closed, and it is too late to seek a bed elsewhere." He made no objections, and things proceeded as usual. He soon took his Bible, called the family around him, and began to read. The lesson was in Isaiah. He had not read far before he began to explain a passage. "This," said he, "refers to our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. It points out the glory of His character and of His person as the supreme God and Lord of all; exhibits Him as the Maker as well as the Saviour of the world. Do you not think so, Mr. Barker?" said he. I remained silent. "Is not that your view of the subject, Mr. Barker?" he added. "I have no objections to offer at present," I said. This did not seem exactly to satisfy him; but he went on, and read again. "And so it is," said he; "we are all by nature as an unclean thing; there is no health in us. How deeply

we are fallen, Mr. Barker! Do you not think so, Mr. Barker?" I made no reply. He wished to know why I was silent. I said I did not like to be always talking on those matters,—that I would rather he would read on, and allow us to think about the chapter at our leisure afterwards. All this time his wife was dreadfully fidgety. She wanted to speak to him, but could not. She wished to control him by her looks, but to no purpose. The proof of the truth of what I had said was becoming too strong for her, and she could scarcely sit still on her chair. He proceeded: "This," said he, "refers to the glory of the Church of Christ in the latter days, when the Gentiles shall all be converted, and the Jews brought back to their own land. This will be a glorious time, Mr. Barker. What are your views on this subject, Mr. Barker?" Then he added some further remarks, concluding with the question, "Do you not think so, Mr. Barker?" I now began to laugh right out, I could hold no longer. "And do you laugh at God's Holy Word?" said he; and a terrible lecture he would have read me, had not his wife broken out and said, "Hinney, you are to blame, you are to blame. You won't let Mr. Barker alone; he would be silent if you would allow him; you are too bad." He repeated his terrible rebuke of my levity, and I began to explain. I told him what had passed between his wife and me before he came in. I told him all I thought about his way of proceeding towards me in those matters, and he, poor fellow, was completely confounded. I

told him, it seemed to me as if he really took pleasure in tormenting people; as though he could not be happy unless he thought he was making other people miserable,—that he seemed to begrudge those that were around him the least ease, or quietness, or pleasure, and to wish to keep them on a perpetual rack. It was his time now to explain and apologise, and what do you think was the reason he assigned for his proceedings? "Hinney," said he, "Mr. Barker is a young minister, and I wish to inure him to hardness as a good soldier of our Lord Jesus Christ." I told him there were painful things enough in the world to inure men to hardness without him making more, etc. After this he never annoyed me much in that way again. He did not allow me to rest altogether; that would have been too much; but he was a vast deal better; and if he ever after this began to be queer, I always felt greater confidence in refusing to talk to him, and in letting him know that I expected to be allowed to have a little of my own way in those matters.

I never could persuade myself but that this man was, after all, a good man. I believe he really feared God and loved his fellow-men. I think he was a man of conscientiousness and benevolence, of sobriety and purity. Among other proofs of his benevolence, I may mention, that he took an orphan family under his care, and reared them. He made them work, it is true; he made everyone work that was under him; but he fed, clothed, and taught them

in his way. He acted, in short, like a father to them.

At Newcastle-on-Tyne a meeting was formed, a short time after I came to the Circuit, for conversation on religious subjects. R. Banks, a Baptist preacher, and J. Blackwell, S. Frost, J. Townsend, and some other members of the Methodist New Connexion, were the principal members. I attended some of those meetings, and expressed myself somewhat freely on certain points of doctrine, especially on such subjects as the witness of the Spirit. The other members talked about people *feeling* their sins forgiven, and feeling they were in the favour of God. I said it would be better to use the word *know* instead of *feel*,—that men might *know* that their sins were forgiven, but could not feel it,—that they might feel joy in consequence of knowing or believing they were accepted of God, but could not feel the acceptance itself. This startled some of them, and they seemed as if struck dumb. S. Frost, the doctor, asked what was the difference between knowing and feeling; he could see no difference. I explained the difference; showed that we knew many things we could not be said to feel. Another thought I was treading on dangerous ground. And thus the members proceeded. I tried to enlighten them, but to very little purpose. Most of them were too old to learn anything new, especially from a youth. Yet I still continued to go to the meeting for a while, and to express my thoughts with a measure of freedom; but my sentiments were

not over-kindly received, and an intimation was given by some of the members, that a young man like myself, a preacher, supported by the Methodist community, should be careful not to run into anti-Methodistical notions,—that, in short, he should not have opinions of his own at all, unless he could make the opinions of the *body* his own. I, in consequence, soon gave up my attendance at the meeting, and the meeting soon fell through.

The superintendent preacher in the Newcastle Circuit was J—— C——, a little man both in body and mind, but a person of great importance in his own estimation. Like most of the preachers I had to do with, he seemed to consider that a young preacher was guilty of rebellion and impiety if he happened to think or speak in any way not in accordance with the judgment or prejudices of his elders. The young preacher that had travelled with him the year before I went to Newcastle, had called Mr. C—— *Bishop*, and he had conducted himself towards him, as I was given to understand, with the greatest servility. C—— seemed to expect the same kind of servility and flattery from me, but I was not prepared to give him what he expected. I had no idea of flattering anyone, or of being a slave to anyone. At the same time, I felt nothing towards him but what was kind and friendly, and often went to see him, and conversed with him,—talking over matters with great freedom, laying down my objections to a number of words and forms of expression generally used in speaking and

writing on these subjects. But he was far from being worthy of the confidence which I reposed in him. At first, he did not reveal himself in his true character; he appeared for a length of time to be very friendly, and wishful to promote my comfort and welfare, and to assist in making my way plain before me in the Circuit. It was his professions of kindness that led me to speak with him so freely as I did. But I at length found reason to repent of the confidence which I had reposed in him. I conversed with him on the subject of the Trinity, the atonement, the doctrine of original sin, regeneration, justification, sanctification, the witness of the Spirit, and the like, expressing my dissent, also, from many of the common opinions held on those subjects, and stating what appeared to me to be the pure Scriptural doctrines on these and similar subjects. He seemed to concur in what I said in general, and expressed great pleasure in having those subjects stript of the mystery in which they had been wrapt, and brought into an intelligible and rational shape. I had not at this time entirely rejected the orthodox doctrines on those subjects; on the contrary, I considered myself a believer in them all, only I had, as I thought, discovered the true, the rational, the scriptural explanation of them. I had no idea I could be a heretic or heterodox so long as I kept so plainly to Scripture and common sense. Nor was I aware that my sentiment approached so nearly to the doctrines of Unitarians, as I afterwards found out they did.

His conduct and conversation altogether led me to suppose that he was friendly to freedom of thought and to spiritual improvement,—that he delighted in liberty himself, and was wishful to give liberty to others. At the same time, I heard from different quarters that he had expressed himself privately, to several members of the Church, to the effect that he was doubtful and suspicious with respect to my orthodoxy, and had fears that I might not turn out to be sound in the faith. It seems that his manner of proceeding was this:—At first, when the people spoke favourably of my discourses, he would say, "Yes, yes; but I think his sermons would be no worse if they had a little more Christ in them." In this way he introduced further observations, saying how highly he respected me, but pointing out defects in point of doctrine, which, if remedied, would make my discourses all that a person could wish them to be.

My wife was convinced long before me that his profession of friendship was not sincere,—that the freedom of conversation which he encouraged was for the sake of obtaining opportunities to betray me; and she warned me repeatedly against placing over-much confidence in him. But I was always unsuspicious, and therefore neglected my wife's admonitions, and went on. At length he showed himself openly, and proved my wife in the right. The occasion of the revelation was as follows:—I had objected to leave Blyth and go to Newcastle on one

occasion at the appointed time. It was while the cholera was very prevalent in the district, and being rather unwell myself, I requested Mr. C—— to take my place at Newcastle, and allow me to take his place at Blyth for a fortnight. It seemed most reasonable and desirable, at such a time, that we should both be at our own homes, so that if anything happened to either ourselves or our families, we might be able to help or attend each other, and have each other's company. My Superintendent, however, objected to the proposed change, and insisted that I should leave my home, ill as I was, and take my usual appointment at Newcastle and the neighbourhood. I refused to do so, and this brought him out in his true colours. He called a meeting, and laid the matter before the leaders and stewards at Newcastle, and expressed himself very violently. He would fain have had them take measures instantly for my removal from the Circuit. His haste and violence, however, defeated his purpose. He gave several of the people reason to suspect his motives were not good,—that he was influenced by jealousy, and not by a regard to the interests of the Connexion, and they refused, therefore, to do as he wished. He then accused me of heresy as well as insubordination, which led to replies from others, and it then came out that he had for a long time been slandering me in private, and labouring incessantly to injure me in my reputation and influence. Nay, that while he was professing all friendship towards me, he had gone so far as to propose to the

Circuit Steward to call a Circuit meeting to try me for heresy, and to have me laid aside from the ministry. These revelations went seriously against my accuser, and the storm he had sought to raise against me turned round against himself, and afflicted him terribly. Even those very persons who had been made his confidants, with the exception of one or two, turned against him; and when the April quarter-day arrived, the whole Circuit, with those one or two exceptions, united in petitioning the Conference to station me amongst them a second year. I was appointed for an additional half-year.

CHAPTER XI.

SUNDERLAND CIRCUIT.

I HAVE stated that after a year spent in the Newcastle Circuit, I was appointed to that Circuit again for six months longer. It was appointed by Conference that at the end of six months I should change with the Sunderland preacher who lived at Durham. As the period for my removal drew near, I went over to Durham to look after a house or rooms, and had an opportunity of seeing one or two members of the Durham Society. There I found that several were unwilling to part with the preacher that was with them, and that they looked on the exchange appointed to take place between him and me with very unpleasant feelings. I, however, made arrangements with respect to rooms, and at the appointed time, about the close of November, the change took place. The day that we removed from Blyth to Durham was an exceedingly stormy one. The wind was high, and carried along with it a perpetual fall of sleet and snow. Our furniture, which was sent off in the morning in an open waggon, was exposed to this downfall till night. The bed and the

bedding were cold and damp, and parts of them quite wet. We ourselves also suffered from the wet and cold on our journey. Yet when we got to Durham no one invited us to their house. No one welcomed us for the night to a warm, a dry, and comfortable bed. We had to take our things, damp and wet as they were, to our own rooms, lay the beds on the floor, and, at the risk of our health and our lives, I and my delicate wife, who at that time needed special attention and care, together with our little one, had to pass the cold night upon them just as they were. We all suffered in consequence in our health, but we all recovered, and still remain alive. The mistress of the house, of whom I had taken the rooms, was a member of the Society, but in no respect a superior or exemplary woman. We, of course, were not likely to be over comfortable in such circumstances, and yet we were far from being unhappy. I minded my work, and found great pleasure in it, and my wife confined herself chiefly to the house, attending to her domestic concerns after her usual custom; so that, notwithstanding our trials, we passed our time, on the whole, very comfortably and happily.

There were two friends I met with at Sunderland, and in whose company I frequently spent a little of my time, that I esteemed more highly than the rest. Their names were Joseph and Grace Potts. They were both steady and exemplary Christians, and real inquirers after truth. They were members of the Old Methodist Society, but were still of a liberal disposi-

tion, and could associate with lovers of truth and of religion, without regard to the sect to which they might belong. Though I belonged to the New Connexion, these estimable people showed me as much regard as they would show to a member or a minister of the body to which they themselves belonged. They took delight in rational and religious conversation, and were pleased to hear anything new that was true. They were also willing to have even their own peculiar opinions freely canvassed, and could both bear to hear what was to be said in favour of opinions which they thought erroneous, and in opposition to opinions which they thought true. Their spirit and manner were such as to make one feel perfectly at liberty in their presence, and to lead one both to open his heart and his lips in their society, with the same freedom as if one were sitting at his own fireside. Joseph and Grace Potts were both of them very tall people, and very straight as well; and I often thought their bodies were fair emblems of their souls. They had received no extra education in their younger days, nor been specially favoured with means of instruction afterwards; but they were naturally thoughtful, intellectual souls, and had made a good use of the few opportunities of gathering knowledge with which they had been favoured. I spent many happy hours in their society while on the Sunderland side of the Circuit, and have spent many still happier hours in their company since; and I think of them to this hour with the greatest satisfaction and pleasure.

When a minister in a Connexion at war with their own, even when I was expelled from every religious denomination called orthodox, and disowned and denounced as a heretic and an infidel by the sects of the country generally, they still continued to read my publications, to receive me into their house when I visited Sunderland, and to show me, without any affectation or fuss, the truest kindness, the heartiest and most unsophisticated Christian goodwill. God bless them! I shall always remember my past acquaintance and intercourse with them with the truest pleasure, with the most unmixed satisfaction, and I shall ever feel disposed to believe, I imagine, that they were truly Christian people, real servants of God, true disciples of Christ, fair examples of Christian simplicity and purity, and of Christian love and gentleness.

Durham was in the Sunderland Circuit, and Mr. Jones, the superintendent preacher, lived at Sunderland. Sunderland and Durham were twelve or fourteen miles asunder, and most of the country places where I used to preach were from six to nine miles from Durham. It was my lot to go regularly round the whole Circuit, preaching at every place in my turn. About one Sunday in three I preached in Sunderland; another Sunday in three I preached at Durham; and the other Sunday I spent at Houghton-le-Spring, Easington Lane, Hetton, Lumley, and Philadelphia.

At Easington Lane, I used to stay at Joseph Love's. Joseph Love was the son of a collier at Whitby, near

Shields; and he himself, while a youth, had worked in the pit. By some means or other he contrived to save a little money, and began shop-keeping. He prospered in his new business, and now had a large shop at Easington Lane, and was doing a good deal of business in other places besides. He had, in fact, become rather a rich man. He had had no education beyond being taught to read and write a little, and even his ability to read and write, I fancy, was not very considerable till after he became a man. He was a free, kind person, and his wife was as free and friendly as himself, and both together did what they could to make the preachers comfortable during the time which they spent in their house. They were very kind to me. Both took delight in spreading for the preacher a good table, in pouring out for him a good glass of ale or whiskey grog, and in supplying him with pipes and tobacco. They took care to give him a good, warm, comfortable bed; and laboured to make his stay with them agreeable by their kind and cheerful conversation, and they did what they could to secure, for such preachers as they thought good for anything, a large congregation. Their kindness to me, I believe, was even greater than to most. Both Joseph Love and his wife had got a very favourable opinion of me, and esteemed me very highly as a preacher. The first time I preached the chapel was full, and it was full every time afterwards. On Sundays the place was crowded, and people, at times, were unable to obtain admission. The ser-

mons I preached were generally the subject of conversation with Mr. and Mrs. Love afterwards. They delighted in religious and theological conversation. They encouraged me to speak with the greatest freedom on every subject on which I had thought, and I told them, in general, all that was in my mind. We conversed on the prevailing errors of Methodistical theology, and on the foolish, the childish, and useless way of preaching generally in vogue. I pointed out to them in what particulars I thought the prevailing theology, was false, what opinions were unscriptural and unreasonable, and what great truths and moral principles of Christianity were generally overlooked or misunderstood. They listened with as much pleasure as I spoke, and received with the greatest readiness whatever truth I unfolded to their minds. They did not pretend to agree with me while in truth they differed; they did not endeavour to draw me out in conversation for the purpose of taking advantage of my freedom of speech: they really did agree with me; and were truly wishful to learn the truth, as well as to bring others to understand it and preach it. They encouraged me to go on in my reforming labours, and were as sanguine as myself with respect to the success which would ultimately follow them. Still, kind as they were, they were the means of getting me into trouble. What I said to them, was as freely repeated to other people. I never told them to keep any secrets, and they never thought of keeping any. They conversed with the other

preachers that came to their house with the same freedom with which I conversed with them. This soon created an alarm in the mind of my Superintendent, Mr. Jones, and the largeness of my congregations increased this alarm. He therefore began to use means to counteract my influence, and manifested a mean and persecuting disposition towards me; and to punish the country societies for showing greater respect to my preaching than to his, he refused to plan me at their places on collection days, that they might suffer a little in their finances. If he had planned me on the collection days, the people would have had larger collections; while by planning himself on those days, the collections were reduced to a very trifle; and thus he gratified his jealousy by making it necessary for the societies to raise more money privately among themselves.

Mr. Jones also talked freely with Mr. and Mrs. W—— of Durham, representing me as a dangerous young man, as a great heretic, and impressing upon them the necessity of doing something towards either lessening my influence, or bringing me to better views. Mr. W—— wrote to others in the Connexion, and endeavoured to spread the alarm respecting me amongst the leading influential members of the body; and it became manifest before the April Quarterly Meeting arrived, that efforts would be made by Mr. Jones and his friends, both to prevent me from being stationed in the Circuit for the following year, and to prevent me from being

received into full connexion at the Conference. These things caused me and my wife considerable uneasiness, but we bore things patiently. We trusted in God, and believed that right and truth would triumph in the end.

CHAPTER XII.

SUNDERLAND CIRCUIT (*continued*).—ADMITTED INTO FULL CONNEXION.—APPOINTED TO SHEFFIELD.

IT is the custom of Circuits, at the April Quarterly Meeting, to appoint representatives to Conference. The common custom was for each Circuit to appoint one preacher and one layman as representatives; it was customary for them to send a preacher one year, and a layman another. At this Quarterly Meeting the Circuit appointed me to represent them in Conference. Among their reasons for so doing were the following:— In the first place, they had not confidence in Mr. Jones; and did not believe he would truly represent their wishes and interests. They believed, on the contrary, he would endeavour to prevent them from obtaining their wishes; that he would set himself in opposition to what the Circuit desired. In the second place, it was found I should be obliged to go to Conference, whether appointed as a representative by the Circuit or not; and as it was found that by appointing me they would be able to save expense, I was requested to allow myself to be appointed as the Circuit representative.

This was not very disagreeable to me; on the contrary, I expected to be able to plead my own cause to better advantage, with respect to the restoration of my year, if admitted into Conference. Accordingly, I agreed to be their representative. This gave rise to fresh commotions. Mr. Jones was excited beyond measure, and besides endeavouring to stir up the Circuit against me, he sent letters all round the Connexion, to excite the feelings of the Superintendents and leading men in different parts against me. Things had come to such a pitch, that at the adjourned Quarterly Meeting it was thought necessary to appoint a lay representative to go to the Conference in addition to myself. The meeting accordingly appointed Mr. Joseph Love, of Easington Lane, to that office. Mr. Jones was now more violent than ever. He declared his determination to go to Conference, whatever might happen, and intimated that the consequences of what the Circuit had done would be terrible enough, both to them and to me. Still the Circuit persisted in its course, and I and Mr. Love remained its delegates to the Conference.

The Conference was held that year at Nottingham. Mr. Love and I reached Nottingham on the Sunday evening previous to Whitsuntide. It was the custom and the duty of the superintendent preacher of the Circuit where Conference was to be held, to write to all the Circuits to ascertain what persons were appointed by them as their representatives to provide

for them homes during their stay at Conference, and then to write back to the representatives to tell them where their homes would be, or at what houses they would be quartered. The Superintendent of the Nottingham Circuit however, John Bakewell, refused to provide homes for me and Mr. Love, and neglected altogether to write to us. He had received Mr. Jones's account of our election, and had taken upon himself to become both judge and executioner in the affair. He had chosen to decide a question that Conference alone had authority to decide, and to decide it without hearing the accused at all; but his conduct did not altogether dishearten us, though we could not but regard it as exceedingly unreasonable and unjust. Mr. Love and I, when we found that no place was provided for us by Mr. Bakewell and the Committee, retired to an inn, and provided ourselves with lodgings and food. About ten o'clock at night a message came to request us to go to Mr. Sutton's shop. Mr. Sutton was a bookseller in Nottingham, and one of the leading members in the New Connexion. His son, too, was a very active and influential person in the Connexion there. When we got to Mr. Sutton's shop, we found Mr. Bakewell and some other preachers, along with Mr. Sutton, waiting for us. They instantly began to question us in the most violent manner, and then proceeded to treat us as though condemnation had already been pronounced on us. We reasoned with them for a short time, but

finding ourselves unable to make any impression upon them, we left and retired to our lodgings. Next day, Sunday, Bakewell and his counsellor began to be ashamed of their proceedings. They found they had not only acted illegally, but that many of the Nottingham people were very much grieved at the idea that some of the delegates to the Conference had been obliged to seek lodgings and accommodation at a public inn. After the morning's service in the chapel, Mr. Bakewell came to us, and showed something like repentance for his previous proceedings, and told us that if we thought well, we might have accommodation at the house of Mr. S——. We accepted the accommodation, and remained at Mr. S——'s during the Conference. When Mr. Bakewell had provided us a house, he then did me the honour to request me to preach at one of the chapels in the Circuit, and I complied with his request. It now began to appear that the hasty, the unreasonable, and unconstitutional proceedings of Mr. Bakewell and his counsellors, had awakened considerable sympathy in our behalf, and that however strong the feeling amongst the Conference members was against us, there was still some portion of feeling in our favour.

On Monday morning, at the appointed time, I and Mr. Love went to Conference. After singing and prayer, the names of the Circuits were read over, and the names of the delegates for each Circuit called for They had not gone far with this part of the business

before they came to a Circuit which had sent the younger preacher instead of the Superintendent. On other occasions this matter would not have excited the least discussion; it would have passed by as a matter of course, for each Circuit was understood to have the right of sending which preacher it thought best to represent it in Conference. But on the present occasion this case caused great discussion, and led to a considerable number of motions, amendments, counter motions, and counter amendments. It was known that my case would have to be decided afterwards, and the leading members of Conference, anxious to be able to decide against my election with some appearance of consistency and legality, were wishful to take advantage of this case to pass some law or resolution which might furnish them with a pretext for excluding me. William Shuttleworth moved that a note should be placed on the public minutes, stating that in this case the Superintendent minister was ill, or unable to attend Conference on account of some particular cause. This proposal, however, was founded on a palpable falsehood, and was rejected; so he made another which met with a similar fate. James Dixon of Sheffield then came forward, and after some very strong remarks, proposed another motion more untenable than even Shuttleworth's had been, which was instantly set aside, and made to give place to another motion or amendment. How the matter was at last disposed of, I do not recollect; I believe no motion at all was passed, but that

the appointment of the Circuit was received as good and legal, without any qualification whatever. At length they came to my case. The first motion was that I should be excluded while the matter was discussed. This was both unusual and unconstitutional, but it was carried, and I was obliged to withdraw. If I mistake not Mr. Love was not excluded. The discussion continued for a length of time. Who spoke in favour of my election, and who spoke against it, I cannot tell; nor can I tell on what grounds the Conference at last came to its decision; but after a long discussion they came to the decision to exclude me from the Conference, and to appoint Mr. Jones in my place. This was one of the most shameless and daring outrages upon the laws and constitution of the New Connexion that it was possible for Conference to perpetrate. After all, they were afraid to carry out their decision. They therefore appointed a deputation to wait upon me and Mr. Love, to ask our consent to the measure. After thinking the matter over, and talking together, Mr. Love and I thought, that unreasonable and unconstitutional as their proceedings had been, it would be best to offer no further opposition, except to protest against them. We accordingly left them to pursue their course, but refused to sanction their proceedings, or to take upon ourselves any responsibility for them. Mr. Love and Mr. Jones were therefore admitted into Conference, and I was shut out.

After a while, the question of my admission into full

connexion came before the Conference. The first point to be settled was, Whether the year that had been taken from me, on account of my marrying before the close of my probation, should be restored to me? On this point there was a long and somewhat sharp discussion; but the decision of the majority of Conference was, that the year should be restored. The majority in my favour was not very large, but it was a majority. The next point for consideration was, Whether I was a suitable person to be received into full connexion? The first question was, Were my abilities sufficient? That was decided unanimously. The next was, Were my labours acceptable to the people? That was also unanimously decided in my favour, and so was every other question, until the Conference came to the question concerning opinions. Here there was a lengthy discussion, and a warm one too. Some contended I was heretical in my belief; others that I was sound; some contended that I denied certain leading doctrines of the Gospel; others contended I did no such thing; that I simply viewed those doctrines in a somewhat different light from others, and used a somewhat different phraseology in stating and explaining them. It was at length resolved that a deputation should be appointed to wait upon me, to ascertain from me personally what my views on the subjects under debate were. The deputation accordingly waited upon me, and they and I had a lengthy conversation on the doctrines of the Trinity, the Godhead of Christ, and the Atonement.

They were satisfied with my explanations on those subjects, but wished to have my sentiments on the Trinity, the Godhead of Christ, and the Atonement in writing. I accordingly drew up the following statement:—

"With respect to the Divinity of Christ, I believe it is taught throughout the New Testament, and I know not how anyone can question it, without questioning the truth of Scripture.

"I believe the sufferings and death of Christ were properly propitiatory, expiatory, or sacrificial; that they were necessary as a satisfaction in some way; that without them God could not forgive sin, so far as we can learn; that through them 'God can be just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly that believeth in Him.'

"On the Trinity, I would say that the Scriptures uniformly speak of the Father as God, of the Son as God, and of the Holy Ghost as God; and they uniformly speak of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as we speak of three persons. But what mode of existence in the Divinity it is that gives rise to this manner of speaking, I know not,—it is a mystery."

When this statement was submitted to the Conference, the discussion was renewed; some contended that the statement of my views was perfectly satisfactory, others that it was not satisfactory at all. One man contended I had said no more than a Socinian or a Unitarian would say; another, Abraham Scott, replied, that a Trinitarian ought to say no

more. At length, the question was put, Whether my statement of views on the subjects under question should be received as satisfactory? when the matter was decided by a large majority in my favour.

The next question was, Should I be received? That was decided in my favour by a still larger majority.

The next question was, Should I be publicly received? This was also decided by a very large majority. At this stage of the business Mr. Wall, the preacher appointed to propose questions to the young ministers that were to be received before the public congregation, stated that he dared not undertake to propose the questions to me,—that he should be afraid of some difficulty arising, which might cause confusion in the public service. Other ministers told him he had no need to be afraid,—that he would have no more trouble with me than with the rest. They were unable, however, to quiet his fears, and before he could undertake to question me publicly along with the rest of the young men that were to be received into full connexion, he must have an interview with me privately, and know from myself particularly what were my objections to the statement of doctrines contained in the rules, or to the wording of those doctrines in that statement. I met him, and satisfied him that he need apprehend no unpleasantness. When the time came for the candidates to be publicly received, I answered the questions

without making any particular remarks, contenting myself with having previously stated what words or forms of expression I considered objectionable, and in what sense I should use those words, if I did use them.

And thus commenced my career as a travelling preacher in full connexion. Every day of Conference, from the first to the last, the feeling of the people assembled became more and more in my favour. At first there was a mighty torrent of feeling against me, and but a very slender stream apparently in my favour: in a day or two the torrent that beat against me became weaker, and the stream that ran in my favour stronger. On the third day the feeling, on the whole, was in my favour, and my opponents were in the minority. On the fourth and fifth days the majority in my favour was very great, and the minority was very low: and at the close I stood well with four-fifths of the people, and perhaps with more.

Now the question was, To what Circuit should I be appointed? Several requested to have me, but none were so anxious or importunate as Mr. Love. He was exceedingly desirous that I should be returned to the Sunderland Circuit. But I could not be returned to the Sunderland Circuit as a married preacher without being appointed the Superintendent of the Circuit. The Circuit had but one married preacher, and one single one, and the married one must, of course, be Superintendent; and to make me Superintendent was an honour which many were unwilling to confer upon

me. The Superintendent had also an amount of influence with which they were unwilling, as yet, to entrust me. Though I had given them satisfaction, in general, with respect to the soundness of my belief, and though there had never been an objection raised against me on the ground of abilities and the like, they had had proof sufficient that I was accustomed to think for myself, and to speak and act for myself, and that I was therefore a dangerous man. Besides, there was a probability that if I was appointed the Superintendent, I should have a place in the following Conferences; and this was a privilege not to be granted to one who had already awakened fears in the minds of many, both with respect to the soundness of his belief and the regularity of his proceedings in matters of discipline. It was therefore decided I should not return to the Sunderland Circuit. Mr. Love did his utmost to induce the Conference to comply with his request, and with the request and wish of the Circuit that had sent him; but to no purpose. His efforts and entreaties were all in vain, and when he found himself unable to accomplish his object, he left the Conference before the close of its sittings, and returned in grief and disappointment to his own home.

My name was put down for Sheffield. I was appointed to be stationed there as a third married preacher. Now Sheffield had never had three married preachers before, and many of the leading members of the Circuit were unwilling to have three married

preachers. They had houses and furniture for only two, and they considered the income of the Circuit to be unequal to the support of three. As soon, therefore, as a copy of the stations, as they stood at the first reading, was transmitted to Sheffield, a Circuit meeting was held, and a resolution passed against the appointment of a third married preacher; and a person was sent to Conference to demand that the appointment should be altered. Mr. Ingleson, the person sent by the meeting, came and laid the decision of the Circuit meeting before Conference. The Conference, however, refused to alter the appointment. James Dixon insisted on its remaining as it was, and, I am told, became answerable for the extra amount that would have to be raised for the third married preacher's support; that is, he engaged that either the Circuit should be brought to raise the additional sum, or that he would make up the deficiency himself. I was accordingly appointed to Sheffield. Andrew Ingleson, the person who had been sent to Conference to remonstrate against the appointment, told me that the Circuit had no objections to me—that it was not against my being stationed there they objected, but simply against the additional expense that would be entailed upon the Circuit; and when it was finally settled that I must go to Sheffield, he assured me I should be most kindly received, and expressed his belief that my labours would be useful there.

The Conference closed, and I returned to Durham,

As I have intimated, they had but two preachers' houses at Sheffield as yet, so that there was no house provided me. An arrangement was therefore made, that I should remain one month at Durham, and that the preacher who was appointed to succeed me at Durham should take my place at Sheffield for a month, to afford the Circuit an opportunity of procuring me a house and furniture. At length, a house was provided and furnished, near Scotland Street Chapel, and my wife and children accompanied me to Sheffield.

CHAPTER XIII.

SHEFFIELD CIRCUIT. — CONTROVERSY WITH UNBELIEVERS.—DISTURBANCES IN THE CONNEXION.

TO those who never knew my uncle in the earlier part of his career when a young man, struggling into popularity and fame, it may not be uninteresting to give a description of him at this period. A lady who was in the habit of regularly attending his ministrations while stationed in the Sheffield Circuit, has a very lively recollection of him when he first came there. He would be about twenty-seven years of age, rough and unpolished, and with little or no pretence to either elegance or refinement. Low and vulgar he never was, and after his marriage it was evident that some attempt had been made to polish him up, and make him look smart and tidy, but with little success. It must be confessed that at this time he was rather a sloven, and to the last he was perfectly indifferent to those little arts of personal adornment which add grace and dignity to the outward man. He had, besides, some of his Bramley habits and a good deal of the Bramley brogue strong

upon him, and never entirely lost either the one or the other to the last day of his life. When I mention that he was often to be seen with his hands thrust up to the elbows in his trousers pockets, so that it was generally remarked by his congregation, it is a sufficient indication of his birthplace and origin. Some kind friends, principally ladies, I believe, suggested to his wife that she should sew his pockets up, but whether such extreme measures were actually taken to break him of the habit, I do not know. Notwithstanding all these defects in his early education and training, there were those at this time, who, beneath the rough and unattractive exterior, could detect the presence of those powers which made him so famous afterwards. Mr. Allin, his colleague at Liverpool, and one of the ablest ministers in the New Connexion, called him an unpolished gem, and predicted his future success. He was as little favoured by Nature as he was by birth and circumstances, so far as his outward appearance was concerned. His complexion was dark, his eyes small and deep set in his forehead, and surmounted by thick, bushy eyebrows, which almost hid them from view. His hair was long and black, and his face surrounded, as if framed, in a mass of long shaggy whiskers of the same raven hue, and the whole was left to take care of itself, without much assistance from either brush or comb. His countenance when not animated by conversation, or by the interest of his subject, had a dull, sleepy, and heavy expression, and exhibited so little intelligence,

that it might very easily have been mistaken for stupidity. Some did mistake it for stupidity, and began to treat him accordingly; but were soon made aware of their error, and few would have given him credit, at first sight, for those great powers of which he was possessed. When he first came to Sheffield, there was a strong feeling against him. Some of the more influential members of the congregation, when they saw him go into the pulpit for the first time, said among themselves, "What commonplace fellow have they sent us now?" But when he began to open his mouth, they discovered he was no novice; and before he had concluded his sermon he had the whole congregation in his favour. His manner in the pulpit and on the platform was quiet, easy, and natural, and free from all ostentation and display. There was no labouring and straining after effect, no shouting and ranting, no violent gesticulation or unnecessary action of the body. His language was plain, simple, and homely, free from all ambiguity and grandiloquence, and terse, powerful, and convincing. No man ever had a more complete command of the pure Anglo-Saxon language. His voice was good, and his manner of speaking slow and deliberate. When he had got well into his subject, his manner became warmer and more energetic, his countenance animated and expressive; the dark locks, which fell down over his forehead, were no longer put back by a movement of the hand, but tossed into their proper place; the great congregation listened with breathless

attention; and when, as was occasionally the case, his language rose to the dignity of real eloquence, his audience was with difficulty restrained from rising from their seats. "Never since the days of William Cobbett," says a writer in the *Newcastle Chronicle*, at the time of his decease, "have the people of England listened to a more trenchant, stirring, or instructive speaker than Joseph Barker."

He will now proceed with his story in his own inimitable manner.

I met with the greatest encouragement in this Circuit. The congregations were exceedingly large, the numbers in society were also large, and every week additions were made to the societies, as well as to the congregations. The chapels were generally crowded, and as to the principal chapel, in Scotland Street, it frequently happened that numbers were unable to obtain admission in the evening. The preachers with whom I was stationed were at this time very friendly, and on the whole, agreeable colleagues. They were William Burrows and Andrew Lynn. Mr. Allin, too, was very kind, and so was Mr. Haslam, another superannuated preacher then living at Sheffield. All things, in fact, seemed now to smile upon us, and our lot was an exceedingly pleasant one. There seemed scarcely anything left for us to covet or enjoy. Our cup of blessing seemed to be full and running over. I laboured with the greatest pleasure. I read and wrote and

studied and preached with the greatest delight. I felt myself perfectly at home both with regard to my labours, and also the society in general, amidst which I was placed. And my wife was as happy as myself.

Soon after I went to Sheffield I commenced a new class, and soon had from fifteen to twenty members. Most of them were young people, and several of them seemed to be very promising characters. My mode of leading a class differed considerably from the common one. My object was to awaken and cherish in the minds of the members a desire for knowledge, and to impart to them as much important religious information as I could. I proposed to them no questions respecting their feelings. I never asked them whether they knew or felt their sins forgiven? I never asked them whether they could tell the time or place where God spoke peace to their souls, or where God set their souls at liberty. I paid but little regard to mere feelings. My object was to lead my members to a knowledge of the truth, and to bring them to act in accordance with its requirements. I knew that if they sought after knowledge, and reduced the knowledge they acquired to practice, all would be well. I knew that they would never lack the necessary amount of feeling if they lived and laboured as they ought, and that no amount of feeling could be of use to them if they did not thus live and labour. We therefore never had a

noisy, ranting, turbulent meeting, but the conversation was calm and rational.

Some of the young people who were members of my class, continue my friends to this day. One of them, Stephen Bacon, is an active man, and a lecturer in the cause of truth and righteousness at this time. Others have got out of my sight. Where they are, or what they are doing, I do not know. I should be glad to meet them once again, and speak what now is in my heart.

I also proposed a meeting of the preachers for mutual improvement in religious knowledge, and in the ability to write or compose. The proposal was agreed to, and Mr. Allin, myself, Mr. Burrows, and Mr. Lynn, together with my brother, who had come to reside with me, began to meet together accordingly. We used to meet from week to week at each other's houses. Our plan of proceeding was this:—At the first meeting, I read an article on the Character and Tendency of Christianity: this article was criticised, its sentiments and style of composition were all subjected to free discussion. At the close of the meeting a subject was given to each person present, and he was appointed to bring a treatise on his subject in writing, and to read it at a following meeting. We had only one treatise at a meeting, so that each member had four or five weeks to prepare his treatise. My pieces were generally tolerably lengthy, occupying frequently an hour or upwards in reading. Mr. Lynn's, also, were frequently

pretty lengthy, and so were my brother's; but Mr. Burrows's pieces were always exceedingly small. He never brought more than a few pages; his longest pieces could be read in ten or twelve minutes, and at times he brought scarcely anything at all. In fact, Burrows turned out to be a dreadfully idle man.

While I was at Sheffield, R. Carlile came to lecture in the town. It was not long after his liberation from imprisonment. He was advertised in large bills as the champion of free discussion. A considerable number went to hear him, and amongst the rest, several members of the different Methodist societies. Some of my friends printed an edition of my small tract, called "A Few Hints on Various Subjects," and distributed it at the doors of his meeting-place. On a copy of this tract he made some remarks in his lectures, which, with other considerations, led me to take some part in opposing his views. Some wished me to go and oppose him in public discussion; but I was not, at that time, prepared for such a work, so refused.

Thomas Allin took occasion, from the excitement created, to publish a new edition of his sermons on Atheism, with notes, at a comparatively cheap rate. What effect these sermons had, I cannot judge; I believe they were not quite useless.

Carlile's friends laboured hard to bring about a public discussion between Mr. Allin and Carlile, but

without effect. Mr. Allin, I believe, offered to meet Carlile; but Carlile declined the offer, and left the town.

After Carlile's departure, some of his friends published a brief report of his lectures. When I read this report, I was amazed at the folly with which the lectures abounded, especially with the inconsistency of the lecturer's mode of reasoning. He advised people, in reference to religious matters generally, to believe nothing without the strongest possible demonstration. In fact, he went so far as to advise them to believe nothing in religion without ocular demonstration, or, in other words, nothing but what they could see with their eyes. He did, at the same time, show that he expected people to believe him on his bare word. He had no wish that they should ask for ocular demonstration, or for demonstrations of any kind, in favour of atheistical views. Atheistical views he wished them to receive on his own unsupported testimony; Christian views he wished them to receive on no testimony whatever. This led me to write and publish a small tract, entitled "Carlile's Logic," in which I exposed his inconsistency. The tract met with a ready sale, and had, I believe, a good effect. It went through two editions.

The objections which Carlile brought against Christianity, and on which his followers chiefly dwelt in their conversations with others, were objections against its *tendency*. They charged Christianity with being the cause of oppression, persecution, bad

government, and the like. They represented it as a religion of uncharitableness, intolerance, and blood. They contended that the prevalence of Christianity was inconsistent with the peace and happiness of a nation, and that Christianity ought therefore to be exploded, as a means towards national prosperity. On this subject I took up arms against them. I delivered a course of lectures in reply to their objections, and also published my work on "The Character and Tendency of Christianity."

This controversy with the unbelievers of Sheffield had a favourable influence upon my mind. It impelled me to greater diligence in study, and obliged me to write more freely and fully on several subjects. It also led me to see and feel, more fully than I had done before, the necessity of laying aside, and of separating from the pure doctrine of Christ, all human inventions. I saw clearly that the strength of infidelity was in the errors and inconsistencies of theology, and that if Christianity were to be effectually defended against the assaults of unbelievers, it must be defended apart from all peculiarities of orthodox systems. It was plain to me, that in free and fair discussion between infidelity and orthodoxy, infidelity must have the advantage, and orthodoxy suffer a terrible defeat. This controversy, therefore, tended to strengthen my heretical leanings, and to prepare me more fully for becoming an evangelical or a theological reformer. It did, at the same time, tend to strengthen my faith in the truth of Christianity, and to increase my esteem

and love for it. The more I examined Christianity, the more lovely and perfect did it appear, and the more truthful and divine did it prove itself to my mind. The more I was led to contrast Christianity with infidelity, the more did I feel that infidelity was at least a terrible misfortune, if it was not a grievous crime, and that a firm, decided faith in Christian principles was both rational and an exceedingly great consolation and blessing. My mind was therefore perfectly satisfied both of the truth and infinite value of the religion of Christ, and a fresh impulse was thus given to my zeal for its universal spread through the world. I did, accordingly, in my sermons and speeches at public and social meetings, exert myself to the utmost to induce those whom I addressed to use their influence, their talents, and their wealth, to the utmost, for the spread of the religion of Christ through the world. Whether I attended meetings of Tract Societies or of Sunday Schools, of Bible Societies or Missionary Societies, the great object of every address was to impress people with the infinite worth of true religion, and to make them sensible of their obligations, as professing Christians, to use their best endeavours to confer that infinite blessing upon all mankind. My thoughts of the world's conversion were at this period exceedingly vivid. Often did I look forward, with unspeakable delight and joyous anticipation, to the period when the various forms of evil afflicting the human family should pass away,—when the bright revelations of

truth should chase error, and ignorance, and superstition, and crime, from all lands,—when the peaceful influence of the gospel of Christ should hush the din of war, and stop the effusion of blood, and end for ever the cruelties of hate and strife,—when the liberal principles of the Gospel should break the fetters of the slave, dissolve his chains, and set him free,—when all diversities of sects, and all the various schisms of humanity, should lose themselves amidst the prevalence of brotherly love, and ardent universal charity. I say I laboured, at this period of my life, to the fullest extent of my ability, for the spread of the gospel, and for the illumination and salvation of my fellow-men. My thoughts, my visions, and anticipations were, at this period, of a truly delightful character, and they were to me as so many realities. I lived in the hopes and forethoughts of a happy future, as in a world of realities, and scarce a day passed, scarce an hour, in fact, in which my soul was not blessed in the thought of blessing others.

While I was in Sheffield Circuit, Joseph Rayner Stephens, who was a travelling preacher amongst the Wesleyan Methodists in the Ashton Circuit, was suspended, on account of his connection with an Anti-state Church Association; and Dr. Warren was expelled on account of his opposition to Jabez Bunting, in reference to the Theological Institution. These acts of the Wesleyan Conference caused a great excitement throughout the Wesleyan body, and vast

numbers began to be alarmed for the safety of the Connexion. An association was formed, with Dr. Warren at its head, and meetings were held in various parts of the kingdom, for the purpose of calling the attention of the Methodist people to the perilous condition in which the usurpations of the Conference had placed the body. A meeting of the Association was held at Manchester. Thomas Allin, a leading minister in the New Connexion, addressed a letter to the members of the Association, recommending them, in case of separation from the Old Connexion, to unite with them, and not to form a separate body. This address of Thomas Allin's gave great offence to the Methodist preachers, and one of them, John McLean, of Sheffield, expressed himself from the pulpit in a most violent manner in reference to Mr. Allin. He was reported to have prayed "that God would palsy the arm that was lifted up against their body, and the tongue that could speak against it." Thomas Allin wrote to McLean on the subject, and the private correspondence was followed by a public controversy. Mr. Allin published a number of letters addressed to McLean, justifying what he had done, and exposing the corrupt and popish principles on which the Wesleyan Conference was proceeding. He spoke of the Conference as a society of Jesuits, of the Old Connexion system of Church government as an embryo of infant popedom, and of the proceedings of the Conference as a mass of fraud, injustice, and cruelty. He detailed a number of

Conference acts in support of his statements, many of them of the most atrocious and outrageous character. This brought out young Waddy [late master of Sheffield College], another Wesleyan preacher in the Sheffield Circuit, in reply, and the town of Sheffield was all excitement. I was myself led to take part in this controversy, and published "Two Dialogues between William and John;" William representing a New Connexion preacher, and John an Old Connexion preacher. In these I stated my views with respect to the comparative merits of the two systems of Church government established in the New and the Old Connexion, and endeavoured to answer the arguments by which the Wesleyan preachers were accustomed to justify their principles and proceedings and to assail the principles of the New Connexion. I did at the same time publish another piece, entitled, "An Appeal to the Wesleyan Methodists on the present crisis." I submitted it to Thomas Allin, who sent it off immediately to the *Christian Advocate* (a newspaper at that time published in London by parties favourable to Methodistical reform), in the columns of which it first appeared. From the *Christian Advocate* it was transferred to the *Leeds Times*, and to a number of other provincial papers. I then enlarged it, and published it in the form of an eight page tract. It was extensively circulated, especially in the town and neighbourhood of Sheffield. Ebenezer Elliott, the Corn Law poet, was very much pleased with the Appeal. He spoke of

it in the highest terms, and expressed a great desire to see its author. I accordingly visited him, and had some very friendly conversation with him. He repeated his high opinion of the Appeal, and presented me with a copy of all his own poetical publications as an expression of kindness and respect.

Dr. Warren came to lecture at Sheffield while I was there, and the New Connexion lent him one of their chapels for the occasion. After the lecture, McLean rose up in the gallery to reply, though discussion had not, at that time, been either invited or offered. This led to great confusion. The people in general were determined not to hear McLean, yet McLean was bent on speaking, and several were wishful that he should be heard; hence the meeting was thrown into a terrible state of confusion and excitement. At this period of the proceedings, some of the members of the New Connexion who had been opposed to the loan of the chapel to Dr. Warren, began to reproach the others for what they had done. This added to the unpleasantness. Besides, Dr. Warren did not prove himself equal to the work he had taken in hand. He had no broad principles of Christian liberty to advocate, nor any superior views of theology to unfold. A great deal of what he said was merely personal, and much of the rest was but weak. The results of the meeting were, therefore, on the whole unpleasant. I have no doubt that the New Connexion suffered in consequence of the part it took in this controversy generally. The leaders of the

body manifested too great an anxiety to injure the Old Connexion. Their eagerness to proselytize disgusted and enraged the members of the Old Connexion, and rather injured than helped the cause of reform in that body. It would have been better for Methodistical reform if Mr. Allin and the New Connexion had taken no part in the disputes that agitated the Wesleyan Connexion. It would especially have been better for Methodistical reform if the New Connexion had previously taken a proper position, if it had carried out the principles on which it was originally founded,—the principles of unrestricted Christian liberty advocated by Kilham in his publications. But this the New Connexion had not done. It had shrunk from its duty. It had foreseen the reproach that it would bring upon itself by acting honestly, and had therefore given up reform. The Conference had gradually conformed itself to the likeness of the Old Connexion in all things, except the single principle of lay representation in Conference; in every other respect it had anxiously laboured to obtain a good repute for orthodoxy and strict Methodistical order.

Since the controversies between myself and the New Connexion, or rather between evangelical reformers and the old orthodox sectarians of various denominations took place, the New Connexion has taken another course; it has given up fighting with the Old Connexion altogether. Allin and his friends have, in fact, retracted their charges against the

Old Connexion; the Old Connexion has forgiven the opposition of the New, and friendly correspondence has taken place between the Conferences of the two bodies, and attempts are made to bring them together.

CHAPTER XIV.

SHEFFIELD CIRCUIT.—REVIVALISM.

WHILE stationed at Sheffield, I was frequently invited to preach anniversary sermons in other Circuits; and in every place had large congregations. I attended the missionary anniversary at Nottingham, and preached at the opening of a new chapel at Beeston, in the Nottingham Circuit. I preached at the opening of another new chapel in Halifax, and attended chapel and school anniversaries at Ashton, Hurst, Hollingworth, etc. I had, in fact, become popular in the Connexion, and, at every following Conference, most of the Circuits were wishful to have me stationed with them. The favour thus shown to me excited fresh jealousies in the minds of some of the preachers, and caused them to use their influence against me. Yet I still went forward in my labours, indulging a hope that the time would come when persecution would cease, and when I should find myself in a position to effect such reforms in the Connexion as would render it more effective, and make it a blessing to the world at large.

There was a regular increase, both in the congregations and societies, in the town of Sheffield during

the whole of the first year I resided there. Scotland Street chapel was crowded on Sunday evenings, and a plan that had for some time been in use, of inviting people to attend the chapel by distributing around the neighbourhood small notes announcing the texts to be preached from, was obliged to be discontinued on account of the crowd. South Street chapel was also well attended. On Sunday evenings it was generally filled. And even Bow Street, the worst attended chapel of all, was often filled. And additions were made to the Society every week. New classes were formed, and the members in the old ones became more numerous. A measure of prosperity also was experienced by some of the societies in the country, though none of the country societies kept pace with those in the town. And the members of the societies, as well as the congregations, were generally, I believe, improving in knowledge. My constant endeavour was to impart some clear and useful information to my hearers in every sermon; and in meeting the classes, to give them their quarterly tickets, my object was the same. I never preached a ranting sermon. I always endeavoured to place before my hearers some one great truth or moral principle, and unfold it and enforce it in the clearest and most powerful way I could,—endeavouring in every sermon to make the people wiser and better and happier. And even my companions were often led through my influence to preach more usefully and practically than they had previously been accustomed

to preach. And had things been allowed to go on in this way,—had proper encouragement been given to plain and practical preaching, the good done in Sheffield would have been immense. But many were anxious for what they called a revival. They were not content with people being added to the Church, and with the members of the Church becoming gradually more intelligent, religious, and useful. They wanted a spiritual explosion, a burst of religious excitement. They wanted to see scores and hundreds converted in a night. They imagined that if protracted or revival meetings were held, ten or a dozen might be converted where one was converted on the rational plan on which we had been hitherto proceeding. Besides, Conference was coming; and the superintendent preacher was wishful to make a great appearance at Conference. He was wishful to have it believed that he had been the means of enlightening and electrifying great multitudes. Preparations were therefore made for getting up a revival. Meetings were appointed, and parties were fixed upon to take part in them. I was myself urged to take part in those meetings; but hesitated and objected. I was afraid that harm would be done by them, and stated my fears. My opinion was that we were already going on very well, and that the plan which they proposed would mar, instead of mending, the state of the societies; and I told them my opinion. No matter; they had formed their plan, and they were determined to carry it out. They accordingly com-

menced their revival meetings, the preachers began to preach revival sermons ; and their labours appeared to be attended with very great success. The body of Scotland Street chapel was crowded at the prayer-meetings, and scores in a night professed to be converted. I was in doubt at times whether I was right in standing aloof from the revival services, and more than once went into the revival meetings and took part in them, endeavouring to master my objections and repugnance to them ; and at times I partially succeeded. But it was all to no purpose ; my objections and repugnance to the wild uproar and confusion attending those meetings returned upon me, and I was obliged to content myself with going on in my usual course. At times I thought ill of myself on this account. I thought Burrows and Lynn had a kind of goodness, or a measure of holiness that I had not ; and many a time wished I was something like them. At other times, however, I was more content with myself, and more disposed to regard my colleagues as in error. Meanwhile the revival went on. Burrows prayed and shouted with all his might, and Lynn, with his bulky frame, almost as tough as iron, and with lungs like leather, shouted and sang and ranted with all his powers. Their manner of proceeding was truly dreadful. They jumped over the forms, climbed over the pews, kneeled down and prayed beside such as they supposed to be penitents, whispered in their ears, urged them to believe, talked in sterner ways to such as they supposed to be un-

awakened, thundered in their ears the horrors of damnation and eternal wrath, scores of them joining together to raise the wild excitement to its highest pitch. The screams, the shouts, the jarring songs, the disorders and indecencies were at times quite horrible. On many occasions, three, four, or five, and at times even ten or twenty would be praying and shouting together. While some were praying, others would be singing; while some were moaning and groaning, crying or shrieking, others would be shouting with all their might, "Glory, Glory!" "He is coming, He is coming, He is coming!" "He is here, He is here!" while others would be exclaiming, "I believe it, I believe it, I believe it!" "I feel Him, I feel Him!" "He is knocking at my heart!" "He will save! He is saving!" "Glory, Glory!" "He has pardoned my sins!" "I am saved!" "My soul is at liberty!" No sooner would the last expression gain the ears of any of the preachers or leaders in the meeting, than they would call out at the highest pitch of their voices "Another soul is saved! Another soul is pardoned! Let us praise God!" and at once they would strike off the Old Hundred:

"Praise God from Whom all blessings flow," etc.

And while some scores were singing this verse, some scores or hundreds more would be still groaning, shouting, whispering, screaming, leaping over the forms, falling down on the floor, climbing over the pews, whispering in people's ears, or lifting up the

loud voice of warning to some apparent triflers who had come to gaze upon the awful scene. At times two or three lots would be singing together, while six or eight groups more would be praying or talking in other parts of the chapel, all at the same moment. Occasionally Burrows would retire into the vestry to recruit himself with a glass of wine or a little brandy and water, and then return to his labours again in the chapel. And thus would things go on for two or three hours, till the leaders of the revival were utterly exhausted and their voices gone; and then, after a while, they would dismiss the meeting. These meetings were held almost every night for several weeks, and in the course of a month or two it was stated that some hundreds had found peace, or got into liberty at these meetings.

All the converts were invited to meet in class, and it was customary for persons to have paper and pencil in readiness at those meetings, to put down the names and residences of the converts, and the class to which they were invited and urged to go. When a person professed to be converted, the paper and pencil came out, the name and address were put down, and some one was afterwards appointed to wait upon the converts at their houses and lead them to their respective classes.

At the following quarter-day, the number of the members in the Circuit was considerably greater than it had previously been, but not so much greater as the reported number of converts had led

some to expect. Out of the three or four hundred converts, not more than a hundred or a hundred and fifty could be found. Many of the converts had already fallen away. Some that were converted at night, were converted back again before the morning. Others were found to have been converted and counted several times over. Some of the converts were drunk at the time of their conversion; and when the influence of the drink and the excitement had passed away, they were as far from God, and as far from meeting in class, as they had been before they attended the revival meetings. Others, again, turned out to be persons who had begun to meet in class before the revival commenced, and who had given every sign of a determination to learn and do God's will. They had not, however, experienced a sudden and miraculous conversion. They could not tell the time and the place where their souls were set at liberty. Hence they were called to the penitent bench at the revival meetings with the rest, and some of them were wrought into the necessary state of excitement, and made to believe that they were converted. But as these had been numbered before, they added nothing to the increase of the Society.

I may also observe, that after the revival had subsided, the societies began to diminish in numbers. Instead of being gratified by the continuance of that regular increase which I had witnessed previous to the revival, I was doomed, now that the revival was

over, to behold a perpetual falling away, a continued diminution of numbers. The revival had caused no increase of religious feeling; it had only occasioned a sudden and a premature explosion of that feeling. It had not improved the character of the congregations; it had only hurried some to a premature step, and ruined others by driving them, first into wild excitement, and secondly into hypocritical professions. The revival, as it was called, had, in fact, done infinite mischief. It had suspended all rational operations for the spread of truth and the promotion of righteousness. It had interrupted all rational and deliberate thought, and involved the religious feelings and rational principles of many in disorder, if not in ruin. It had, besides, interrupted the meetings for business and discipline. Its disorders and indecencies had disgusted many of the congregations, and driven them further from connexion with us. It had strengthened false notions about religion and conversion in many, and increased their inability to understand the truth. It had thrown some good people into needless alarm about their spiritual state, by making them fear or fancy that they had not been rightly converted. It did harm in many ways; incalculable harm! And it is a fact, that from that period to the present, the societies in Sheffield have never recovered from the bad effects of that revival. They have gradually, and, I believe, continually gone down. Before the revival commenced, there were in the Sheffield

societies, and in the country places, somewhere about sixteen hundred members. That number had dwindled down to six or seven hundred some years ago; and I question whether it has not continued to dwindle to the present time.

The wild excitement which people frequently experience in what are called revivals cannot last. The spirit of man was not made to endure such wild excitement continually; and unless the people, when roused, awakened, or converted, can be brought to read, to think, to gather knowledge, to be really scholars in Christ's school, students of His revelation, seekers after all truth,—unless they can be trained to the proper exercise both of their intellectual and moral faculties, their conversion will prove a curse instead of a blessing; they will not only fall away, but their last state will be worse than the first.

We have nothing to say against excitement itself. Excitement is natural to man. God meant man to be excited. Man cannot help being excited. The principal part of all the excitement experienced by people in connection with Methodist revivals is all right and natural; it cannot be prevented, and it ought not to be prevented if it could. The evil is that this excitement should not be joined with proper intelligence; that the excited soul should not be led to learn the great and glorious truths of revelation. The evil is, that the excitement should not be regarded as sent by God to prepare the soul for receiving important lessons in religious truth and duty, and for more

readily forming all those habits of self-denial and beneficence which are necessary to the perfection of the Christian character.

I say excitement is natural to man. It is as natural in religion as in love, and calculated to be as useful. No one doubts its usefulness in love. It causes that perfect melting or dissolving of the soul which enables two souls to mingle and become entirely one. It is that which enables a man to give himself up entirely to his beloved one, and which enables a woman to devote herself entirely to her husband; which renders it perfectly easy, natural, and even an exquisite delight to a man to serve his beloved, to minister to her pleasure, to labour for her well-being; and which renders it the highest bliss, the earthly heaven of a woman to minister to the pleasure and welfare of her husband. If there were not this excitement in love, true marriage could never be completed; that perfect and indissoluble union of soul between man and wife, which constitutes true marriage, could not be formed, and the happiness of married life could never be secured. If it were not for this excitement in love, marriage would become a sort of business transaction, a matter of prudential accommodation. It would seldom take place, compared with the frequency with which it takes place at present, and it would still more seldom prove a blessing to the parties concerned. But this wild, this almost boundless excitement which the souls of men and women experience in their first love, is a source of unspeakable

delight, of boundless satisfaction, and tends to render marriage, not only more common than it otherwise would be, but infinitely more delightful and more conducive to man's welfare.

So with excitement in religion. Religion may be considered as a marriage between the soul and universal truth, between the soul and universal duty between the soul and God, between the soul of the individual and mankind, between the soul and the infinite, unmeasured present and the everlasting and incomprehensible future. This union cannot take place, in general, without excitement. Excitement, causing a perfect dissolution or dissolving of the soul, is necessary, in order to prepare the soul for taking a new form, for uniting itself to new beings and new worlds, and to enable it to enter upon a new life. Where this excitement does not take place, there is little prospect that the religious character of an individual will be completely decided. Where this excitement is not felt, religious duty will be more difficult, the pursuit of solid truth will be less interesting. The union of the soul with the souls of other men, its sympathy, its benevolence, its interest in the welfare of mankind, will be defective.

It is true there is no fixed amount of excitement which is necessary to men in religion any more than there is in love. All men do not feel the same excitement in love. Some feel a greater amount; some experience a less. In some men it takes one form; in others it takes another. In one individual

it is milder, and is spread over a larger space of time; in other individuals it is more wild, but occupies perhaps a smaller period of time. In some it is like a fit, an ecstasy; in others it is only a high state of exhilaration. In some it is an uncontrollable passion; in others it is only the life and quickness of the imagination. In some it is an unspeakable and almost intolerable anxiety; and in others it is a delightful, pleasurable, but mild emotion. But it exists in all; it is felt by all; it is essential in all.

So in religious matters. The excitement naturally connected with religion, and essential to religion,—I mean essential to the commencement of the religious career,—is felt by every one; but not by all alike. It is awakened in every one; but it does not assume the same form in all. It varies endlessly, as the excitement of love varies. But to quarrel with it is to quarrel with man's nature, and with the law of God. Our business is not to quarrel with it, but to welcome it, to accompany it with instruction,—to take advantage of it for the purpose of laying the foundation of the Christian character in those who feel it,—to make use of it as a means of more readily uniting the man who feels it to truth, to duty, to humanity, to God, and to the universe of being in which he lives. It is caused by God on purpose to render religion more easy; to render more sure, more complete, more happy, man's spiritual marriage with truth, with duty, with mankind, with God.

Those who revile excitement and discountenance

it, know not what they do. While they are censuring the ignorance of Methodists, they are betraying ignorance as great and as mischievous in themselves. The men who scout excitement, frown upon it, or dread it, are as foolish as those who idolize it, and make it their only study to awaken and perpetuate it. I have no doubt, that while the Methodists have rendered their societies exceedingly shallow, unintelligent, and morally defective by encouraging excitement so unduly, other religious bodies have driven people away from their circle, and obliged them to seek an asylum amongst the Methodists, by not giving to excitement its proper place. We will take some Unitarian congregations as instances. Here you see no excitement. The minister is not excited. His hearers are not excited. Everything of the kind is discouraged. If a son or a daughter of a leading Unitarian manifests this excitement in any form; if a daughter should at any period appear to be melancholy; if her spiritual constitution should seem to be failing or dissolving; if great and solemn thoughts should fill her soul, and her feelings should begin to flow out in tears; if the visible world should appear to be almost annihilated, and the spiritual world to occupy her whole thought and feeling; in a word, should she experience that which the Methodists would call a work of grace, a thorough awakening of the soul, her parents would be alarmed. If a dozen or a score of young people in such a congregation were to experience such a religious awakening,

such a general dissolving of the soul, it would be regarded as a most terrible calamity, as a most fearful or alarming event. Physicians would be sent for; amusements would be recommended; change of air, change of scene, change of company would be urged. Efforts of all descriptions would be made to check the excitement, to terminate the imagined spiritual danger. Now when such a thing happens amongst the Methodists, it is hailed with delight. The parties thus awakened, thus dissolved, are considered as in a most hopeful condition. The work of regeneration is, in fact, considered more than half accomplished in such cases, and the aim of the preacher and of their members is to help forward this excitement to its consummation, under the false impression that this is true conversion, true salvation, true regeneration. The error in both cases is about equal. The Methodists, in making it their great, their chief, their only study to help forward such excitement to its height, and the conduct of certain Unitarians in endeavouring to check it, are both unnatural, both irrational, both terribly injurious to the interests of religion and men's souls. The middle way is the right one. The Unitarian ought to regard religious excitement when it shows itself with pleasure, like the Methodist; though not without some mixture of fear. The Methodist should regard it with fear, like the Unitarian; but not without mixtures of joy and thanksgiving.

During the second year that I was stationed at

Sheffield, my second colleague was Robert Henshaw. Robert was an exceedingly quiet, inoffensive kind of man, disposed to learn, but endowed with only moderate abilities. He was exceedingly quiet in company; he would sit for hours together and never speak. Yet he manifestly took an interest at times in what was said by others, and seemed disposed to learn. He was a middling preacher, perhaps rather better than middling, compared with most Methodist preachers; but he had very little power. Andrew Lynn was a man of a very different character. He had plenty of energy, but little intellect; and the intellect which he had was very little cultivated. But he had considerable dramatic power. What he understood he could represent, at times, in a very lively way. He had the power of making his thoughts visible and striking. His thoughts were often low, and his style was also low; but still, to such as were not easily offended with bad taste, bad grammar, bad logic, and foolish notions, Lynn was a powerful, engaging, interesting preacher. He had a good deal of wit, such as it was, and could make people who were insensible to his defects laugh exceedingly, and keep them on a laugh for a length of time. I have known him keep his hearers laughing for nearly half an hour together. He could, at the same time, represent in lively and striking colours some of the awful things connected with religion. He could portray the character of God, describe a coming judgment and the torments of the damned,

in such a manner as to excite great terror in the minds of those who were uncultivated enough not to be shocked with the horrible character of his notions. But his power was greatest when treating of things that were ludicrous. On these occasions he made both himself and his subjects look as ridiculous or laughable as any one could wish. He had, besides, strong lungs and a good voice, though a nasty intolerable way with him of squeaking, squalling, and making a curious clicking sound with his nose. He had, also, a very fair share of that other kind of power, which I call the power of affection or sympathy, which enabled him to feel and talk so as to make others feel. Hence he could carry along with him at his pleasure an uncultivated and vulgar audience, and produce on them a powerful effect. In prayer he was more powerful than in preaching, and was a clever revivalist, according to Methodistical notions of revivalism. But even in his prayers he could seldom refrain from vulgar witticisms. He was at times as vulgar and ridiculous when conversing with God as when talking to men; and, in fact, frequently made use of what is called prayer as a means of talking to men. He was clever at praying at people; while pretending to talk to God, he would be lecturing those that were about him for five or ten minutes together.

During my second year at Sheffield, Lynn was stationed at Nottingham. He laboured there, as usual, to get up a revival, and succeeded to some

extent. During this revival he prayed and shouted at such a rate, and for such a length of time together, and for so many nights in succession, that he became unwell. Strong as he was, and he seemed the very image of strength, he utterly disabled himself. He could scarcely stand steady on his feet; he had painful and distressing symptoms towards the back of his head, and surgical and medical aid became necessary. He became dreadfully nervous and horribly miserable. He doubted the truth of religion, and was tempted to doubt the existence of God. His soul was in perfect disorder; his thoughts were all confusion, and his fears and anxieties were unutterably dreadful. How long he continued in this state I do not recollect; but he suffered for a length of time. At length his health was partially restored; his mind recovered its tone, and he was able to preach and labour a little in his usual way. Some time after his recovery he visited Sheffield, and I recollect meeting with him at Thomas Allin's, and remember him telling his story. Thomas Allin attributed his fears and doubts and temptations about the truth of religion and the existence of a God to a want of knowledge, to a want of acquaintance with the evidences of natural and revealed religion. Lynn attributed the whole to the malice of the devil. He thought that the devil had done it to stop the revival and to prevent the salvation of souls. He looked upon himself as one whom the devil had particular reasons to dread and to hate, on account of his skill and power in snatching immortal souls from

his jaws. He considered that the devil had held him a grudge for a long time, and had taken this opportunity of avenging himself. Neither Allin nor Lynn were quite right, in my judgment. Wiser men than Thomas Allin have been harassed with foolish doubts and horrible fancies when under the influence of disease, and people as ignorant as Lynn may escape such doubts, if favoured with continual health.

CHAPTER XV.

SHEFFIELD CIRCUIT.—TEETOTALISM, ETC.

WHILE I was at Sheffield, I became a teetotaler. This was one of the most important steps I ever took. The effect of teetotalism upon my constitution, my character, my pursuits, my usefulness, and upon my enjoyment of life, has been most beneficial and delightful. Previous to becoming a teetotaler, my health was very indifferent indeed. I suffered very considerably, and that in various ways. I was frequently subject to toothache; I suffered also in my chest and throat, and was very subject to colds. Scores of times have I preached with my chest all blistered or raw, to enable me to go through my labours without interruption on the Sunday. I also suffered greatly from heartburn, and was seldom free from it a day together.

About the end of July, or the beginning of August, I was invited to preach some anniversary sermons at Boston, in Lincolnshire; and though far from being well, I went and preached. While there I became worse, and was obliged to have medical assistance. The person who attended me was Dr. Small. During one of his visits, he began to con-

verse with me in a very free and friendly way respecting my general health and my habits of life; and after we had conversed for a length of time, and I had told him all I thought or knew respecting myself, he told me that my health was in a very precarious state, and that unless I took great care I should die in eighteen months, or two years at the farthest, of consumption, brought on by dyspepsia or indigestion. I, of course, asked him what means to employ to turn aside the danger; and he gave me the following prescription:

"First. You must study less, read less, and write less, and take more exercise in the open air.

"Secondly. You must give up the use of all intoxicating drinks, and become a teetotaler.

"Thirdly. You must give up smoking.

"Fourthly. You must go to bed without supper; or if you take any supper at all, let it be simply a dry crust of bread and a draught of cold water."

He assured me that unless I followed this prescription I should have no right to expect to remain long in this world.

This was a serious prescription for me; and though very wishful to live, I felt as though it were impossible for me ever to observe it. The first part of it, which required me to read, study, and write less, seemed the most difficult. I had always blamed myself for not reading, studying, and writing more. Reading, studying, and writing appeared to me to be the proper business of my life—the only matters,

comparatively speaking, that deserved attention. I had long lamented that I got on so slowly with writing. I resolved, therefore, never to read or study or write less if I could possibly obtain health and avoid a premature death by any other means. I secretly hoped to read and write more.

The second part of the prescription I had very little objection to. I had already thoughts of becoming a teetotaler. I had joined the old Temperance Society when at Durham, and had given up the use of spirits as a regular drink, never tasting them except as medicine. And before visiting Boston I received from John Andrew, of Leeds, who had been a schoolfellow of mine at Mr. Sigston's, and who had become one of the first advocates of teetotalism, a copy of the *Temperance Advocate*, by Joseph Livesey, of Preston, the originator of the teetotal system. What I found in this *Advocate* made a great impression upon my mind, and led me to think rather favourably of teetotalism. And my mind in general was predisposed to think favourably of it. I had often lamented the prevalence of drunkenness, and grieved over the drinking habits that prevailed in religious societies. The drunken habits of the country generally, and the drinking and drunken habits of preachers and professors of religion, had given me great concern. They appeared to me to be the greatest obstacles to man's welfare; the greatest foes both to plenty, to knowledge, and to piety.

I looked on drunkards as almost incurable, and feared that the vice of drunkenness could hardly ever be driven from society. The *Temperance Advocate* opened to me happier views; it inspired me with new hopes. It had shown me that drunkards could be reformed, and it proved to me that if teetotalism were universally practicable, the world might be delivered from drunkenness altogether. I had doubts, it is true, as to whether teetotalism was universally practicable, and feared it was not. I fancied that some individuals could not live, or at least could not enjoy good health, without a little ale or porter or wine. I even imagined that spirits were in some cases necessary as medicine, and to some constitutions might be essential to the enjoyment of good health. I was strongly inclined to believe that a little ale or porter or wine was essential to my health; that it was necessary sometimes, especially after preaching in hot and crowded rooms, to protect one against the effects of cold or exposing oneself to the night-air or to wet and stormy weather. I had also an idea that the use of intoxicating drinks might, in many cases, be essential to people's health and safety when they had used them a very long time, though these same people might have done without them if they had never been accustomed to use them. It was with me, therefore, almost a settled point that all who had been accustomed to use intoxicating drinks till they began to be rather

old, would have to continue to use them, that teetotalism would have to be preached to the young and to children only, and that the practice could never become general till we had raised a new generation. I had set it down for granted that most old drunkards, as well as most habitual free-drinkers who were old, would have to continue their drinking and drunken habits to the last, or run the risk of losing their lives. I had never up to this time heard a teetotal lecture, or read a teetotal work, except a single number of the *Temperance Advocate* already mentioned; nor ever had any conversation with a teetotaler on the subject of teetotalism. I was, therefore, exceedingly ignorant on the point; but these were my thoughts, my fears, my imaginations. It was in this state of mind I went to Boston and received the prescription from Dr. Small. I was, however, resolved to try the principle, and returned home to Sheffield with that determination. I spoke to my brother on the subject, and he favoured my plan, and was disposed to join me in making the experiment. I resolved, therefore, to make it at once, though with great fear; I might almost say with fear and trembling. I imagined, in fact, that I was risking my life, and was very doubtful whether I should survive the experiment or not. Such thoughts and fears may seem ridiculous to some people now; they almost seem so to myself; but they then seemed rational enough. I cannot describe the solemn terror

with which I ventured for the first time to reject my customary allowance of porter, ale, or wine. I did, however, reject it. I took my stand, resolved to drink no more, unless some strange and terrible necessity, should compel me to do so. I went without my customary glass of ale at dinner; I refused it at night; and I refused my customary glass of wine after preaching on the Sunday morning. I cannot say that I found any great difficulty in giving up the use of intoxicating drinks, except the difficulty, already described, arising from my fears of what might be the consequence. Still I experienced a little difficulty. I do not remember experiencing any difficulty in taking water instead of ale to dinner and supper; but when I came down out of the pulpit on Sunday, and found the chapel-keeper with his glass of sparkling sherry on his little tray waiting for me as usual, I did feel a little difficulty in refusing to drink it, especially as it was already poured out. But I mastered the difficulty, and refused the wine, and never that I recollect experienced any difficulty in refusing it after.

Well, time went on. I kept to my purpose of giving teetotalism a trial; and had not tried it a fortnight before I began to believe that the principle was a good one; that for me, at least, teetotalism was likely to answer very well. Instead of taking any harm by the experiment, I found myself better. Instead of getting worse colds in consequence of not

taking a little intoxicating drink, I found myself freer from colds than before. Instead of growing weaker, I found myself growing stronger. Instead of being less comfortable, I was more comfortable. I had not tried teetotalism above a month before I found myself better in many respects. I had no heartburn; and though I lived in fear of its returning every day, it never did return, and it never has returned. My sleep was sounder at night, and I was more refreshed in the morning. The unpleasant taste in my mouth on awaking was gone, and my tongue was moist and comfortable. I was less heavy and dull through the day; more cheerful and comfortable in company. I had a better appetite for my food; relished it better; digested it better; and it did me more good. I began to experience feelings of health and pleasure never experienced before for years. I could read with more pleasure, and study and write with more pleasure. Instead of being obliged to adopt the former part of Dr. Small's prescription, respecting reading and studying and writing less, I found myself able to read and study and write considerably more. And I could read and study and write, so far as my feelings went, without sustaining injury.

From the time I became a teetotaler, I have never had one half-hour's toothache. The teeth which had begun to decay fourteen years ago, have made no progress in decay, that I can perceive, to this hour.

My teeth are as good as they were when I first became a teetotaler for anything that I know. I can eat with them as well as I could then, and better. Their very appearance is changed; and this of itself is a proof that my general health is better.

I used to imagine that a little ale or porter or wine was necessary when people were weary or exhausted; but have now found out the contrary. I used to think that a little ale or porter or wine imparted a certain amount of strength to the system, and enabled persons to do a greater amount of work than they could otherwise do; but have found out this to be a delusion. I am stronger now without intoxicating drinks than I ever was with them. I not only enjoy better health, greater freedom from disease, but feel myself in possession of a greater amount of strength; I find myself able to do a greater amount of work than formerly; I can work harder, and longer; I am not so soon tired, either in body or mind; and when I am tired, I am sooner rested.

Before I became a teetotaler, I had frequently slight attacks of rheumatic pains; but have scarcely ever felt a touch of rheumatic pain from that day to this; and I have had infinitely more exposure to weather, and an incalculably greater amount of labour, and far more painful trials to pass through since I became a teetotaler than I ever had before. Where I used to write one page in a day, I have, since I became a teetotaler, often written two, three, four, and at times even ten or twenty; where I used to lecture

once, I have lectured twice or thrice. Instead of preaching twenty-five minutes, half an hour, or forty minutes at a time, I have, often preached fifty or sixty minutes, or spoken an hour and a half or two hours at a time. The improvement that has taken place in my health since I became a teetotaler is incalculable, indescribable; and the increase of enjoyment which I have experienced, has also been indescribable.

After I had been a teetotaler a month or so, I heard a teetotal lecturer of the name of Pollard; and after the lecture, which abounded in humorous and instructive stories, I signed the teetotal pledge. Pollard had two kinds of pledges, a teetotal pledge and a moderation pledge, and he gave his hearers the liberty to sign whichever they liked. I signed the teetotal pledge. My reason for signing the pledge was, partly, to induce others to sign. I had not that I know any need of the pledge myself; for I had become a teetotaler without a pledge; I had got over the principal difficulties of teetotalism without the pledge, and my purpose to continue a teetotaler was fixed; and I should have continued a teetotaler if I had never heard of a pledge, for anything I know. But there were those around me, young persons that were in danger of falling a prey to drunkenness, and that did, as I imagined, need a pledge. At least, I saw some around me whom I wished to become teetotalers; and to encourage and induce them to become such, I signed the pledge in their presence at this

public meeting. Some of them signed the pledge after me, and I have reason to believe that my example, in this case, was the means of good to them, and may prove the means of good to them for ever.

After becoming a teetotaler, I met with a good deal of annoyance in my visits to friends' houses. They all brought out wine or ale or spirits, and wished me to take a little ; and all, or nearly all, seemed disappointed when I declined taking any. Some were very much grieved, they thought themselves insulted ; others, however, were more moderate and gentle : but most were disappointed. Some became my enemies on account of my teetotalism ; and amongst the rest, a person of the name of Parkin, who kept a spirit shop. Before I became a teetotaler he had generally given me something, whenever I called on him, towards the funds of the Connexion ; but afterwards, he would give me nothing but shy looks. Some of my friends, when I visited them, would begin to reason with me on teetotalism. With those I reasoned. I stated my views, my wishes, my hopes, and described the happy effects of teetotalism in my own case ; and some of the more reasonable ones were satisfied. A few resolved to try teetotalism for themselves ; but a greater number of them considered it a piece of folly or madness, and some even spoke of it as wickedness and blasphemy. I, however, went forward, resolved to give the principle a thorough trial.

A short time after this I was invited to attend a teetotal meeting in the town, and was voted to the chair. I said a few words in favour of the object of the meeting, and that was my first teetotal speech. It was a very short one, and very far from being a thoroughgoing one. I was not, at that time, satisfied that teetotalism would answer for everyone, and was, therefore, not prepared to recommend it to everyone; much less speak strongly against those who had doubts or fears as to its general practicability. I thought it probable that teetotalism would answer for many people, perhaps for the generality of people; but was not quite sure; and my speech was in accordance with my thoughts. I was, however, desirous that as many as possible should make the experiment; and that those who found, on making the experiment, that teetotalism did them no harm, should join the teetotal ranks and help on the teetotal cause. My doubts, however, were not agreeable to the teetotal leaders who attended the meeting, and I met with a little opposition and rebuke. But the opposition and rebuke were of a gentle and moderate character, and did me perhaps no harm.

While I resided in Sheffield, I more than once saw Montgomery the poet. I was never in company with him at his house, but met him repeatedly at public meetings, and addressed meetings of which he was the chairman. He was a little man, and delicate and womanly in his appearance as well as in his manner. He had no great power as a public speaker,

though he generally spoke sensibly. His head was rather large in proportion to the size of his body, and yet not large enough to render him a man of great power. I should have been glad to have had a little intercourse with him, but I did not think myself of importance sufficient to deserve his notice. I felt as though I should be intruding to visit him. Besides, he lived with two elderly maiden ladies, and how I got the impression I cannot tell, but I had the impression that neither Montgomery nor the ladies he lived with took pleasure in visitors.

I have stated that I had two or three brief interviews with Ebenezer Elliott, the Anti-Corn-Law poet. I had not, however, sufficient intimacy with him to enable me to form an opinion of his character. My impression was that he was a mild, a gentle, and an affectionate man, and that his spirit and behaviour in private might almost be imagined to form a contrast with the fiery and denunciatory energy of his rhymes. But nothing is more common, I believe, than for men of affectionate and gentle natures to be stern and terrible in their public denunciations of fraud, injustice, and cruelty. I have met with several instances in which the soft, the tender, the affectionate in private and social life have been united with all that was strong in argument, stern in reprobation, and terrible in denunciation, in public speeches and writings. But when living at Sheffield, I was not exactly qualified for forming a correct opinion of such men as Elliott and Montgomery. I was, for one

thing, too exclusively a preacher; and, for another, too much of a Methodist. Theology was the region of my thoughts, and Methodism and Methodistical society the world in which I lived. I should be far better able to form an opinion of the character and talents of such persons now. But now I could have no expectation of being welcome to the private circle of Montgomery. If I was then too much of a Methodist to wander beyond the Methodistical fold, I should now be too little of an orthodox man to be endurable to the poet. How difficult it is for thinking men of the same age to get fairly and thoroughly acquainted with each other! What barriers there are to keep them apart, of which persons who know them only by their writings can form no conception.

Though I became a teetotaler at Sheffield, and acted on the principle for nearly nine months, and though my experience of the benefits of teetotalism made me anxious for its spread among others, yet I never, that I recollect, once introduced the subject in my sermons. I preached about temperance, but not in such a way as to make people properly understand what my peculiar opinions were. I saw people in my congregations that needed the teetotal principle as a means of personal salvation, and saw that its adoption by professing Christians generally, could not fail to prove a blessing to mankind at large; yet I never once preached on the subject expressly, that I recollect.

One reason was, no doubt, that it had not yet become sufficiently familiar to my mind. I had a great reluctance to speak on any subject in the pulpit, which was not very familiar to my thoughts. Another reason would be that I had doubts as to whether teetotalism were practicable in every case, and was unwilling to speak on a subject which could not be enforced upon all. But another reason was, that there was a general understanding, an all-pervading feeling in the Connexion, that nothing should be uttered in the pulpit on moral subjects, but what was general; that though evil might be assailed in the lump, no direct attack should be made on any particular vice; or at least, that no direct and special attack should be made on any such vice as was patronised or practised among the leading friends, that nothing should be said in the pulpit calculated to disturb the peace of the society, to offend the friends and supporters of the cause, or drive away seat-holders and contributors to the funds. A preacher would be allowed to speak against injustice in general, but not against any particular kind of injustice common amongst members of the societies, or persons in the congregations. We were allowed to speak against intemperance and in favour of sobriety, but not against spirit drinking, wine drinking, or ale drinking, or in favour of teetotalism. This spirit which pervaded the leaders of the Connexion, would allow us to recommend people to be sober, but would not allow us to recommend teetotalism as the only or the mos

effectual means of becoming sober. This feeling pervades all religious societies. It is a standing law in all denominations, not always written, but universally understood. Preachers may talk as much as they like about the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the sins of the ancient Jews; about the treachery of Judas, the timidity of Peter, and the weakness and earthliness of the rest of Christ's disciples; he may talk about Hymeneus and Philetus, about ancient Felix and Agrippa, about Ahab and his false prophets; he may cry out against the sins of Jewish or Pagan idolaters; he may talk of the luxury of Belshazzar, of the pride of Nebuchadnezzar, of the oppressions of Solomon and Rehoboam; he may cry out against the corruptions of the ancient scribes and Pharisees, and the corruptions of ancient priests and rulers; if he be a Methodist, he may sometimes talk of the errors of Calvinism; if he be a Calvinist, he may sometimes be allowed to hint at the errors of Arminianism; if he be a Protestant, he may inveigh against Popery; if he be in England, he may talk of the benighted millions of Ireland; if he be in Ireland, he may talk of the doleful state of China, Turkey, or Hindoostan; and so he may go on—talk of anything that is far enough before, or far enough behind; but of nothing just at hand, of nothing prevailing in his own congregation or Church.

Under this law I was placed, and by this law I felt myself at one time bound. I never could avoid transgressing altogether: and never passed a

whole year in any Circuit without transgressing it repeatedly; but as a general rule, I believed myself bound to regard it. It was thus things went on while at Sheffield. I became a teetotaler about the month of August, and remained in Sheffield till the Whitsuntide following. During that period I had greatly improved in health; and my faith in the safety, the general practicability, as well as the vast importance of teetotalism had greatly increased in strength.

CHAPTER XVI.

CHESTER CIRCUIT.—TEETOTALISM (*continued*).

AT Whitsuntide the Conference stationed me at Chester. On my way there with my family, teetotalism became the subject of conversation on the coach. One person spoke in its favour, and another spoke against it. I put in a word or two in favour of the teetotaler. The opponent of teetotalism then became abusive, and insinuated that no one would advocate teetotalism unless he had some selfish motive for so doing. He talked and conducted himself in such a manner as to rouse my indignation a little. But I made no show of what I felt. I kept my soul in subjection. But I said within myself, If this is the spirit of anti-teetotalism, —if it has come to this, that teetotalism cannot be tolerated,—if teetotalers and teetotalism are to be abused and insulted in this manner, it is time for me to come forward and see if I cannot do something in its favour. I resolved from that time to stand forward as a public advocate of teetotalism.

Before I went to Chester, several young persons connected with the Chester congregation had be-

come teetotalers. These, when they heard that the preacher appointed to them by Conference was a teetotaler, were exceedingly glad, and looked forward to my arrival amongst them with a great deal of joyous expectation. They had previously been very much despised; they now thought that when they should have a preacher on their side, teetotalism would be treated with a little more respect. They had also met with a good deal of opposition from their foolish fellow-citizens, and now hoped that when they had a teetotal preacher he would aid them in publicly advocating the cause, and meeting the opposition with which they were assailed. When I arrived at Chester, those young teetotalers soon visited me, and made known their principles, and told me their thoughts, their wishes, and their hopes. The insolent and unmanly conduct of the opponent of teetotalism I had met with on the coach, prepared me to listen to them with a great deal of favour, and to hear of their plans and labours, their wishes and their hopes, with no small pleasure. I gave them at once to understand that I was not only a teetotaler myself, but wished to promote the spread of teetotalism among others. I gave them to understand that I should be glad to co-operate with them in any way I could, and to assist, according to my ability, in publicly advocating teetotalism in their meetings.

It was not long before I had an opportunity of declaring my views to the public. Soon after my

arrival in Chester, the teetotalers had their first anniversary, I believe, and I was invited to attend. They took tea in the cheese market, and I addressed them after tea in the open air. My speech was not a very long one, nor was it a very strong one. I had not yet thoroughly studied teetotalism. My knowledge on the subject was but scanty. My acquaintance with facts was very limited; and even the knowledge I had, was not exactly at my command. Still it was plain and true, and it gave satisfaction to my teetotal hearers, and did some good, I believe. It requires more than knowledge to enable a man to speak well on a subject. It requires a man to be familiar with his subject. It requires a man to have been accustomed to speak. A man will often have a good deal of knowledge on a subject, and yet not be able to speak well on that subject. His thoughts may not come when he wishes them; and even when they do come, the fit or necessary words may not be just at hand. Good speaking depends much on practice. A man may be an excellent speaker on some subjects, and not be an excellent speaker on others. Before I went to Sheffield, I had frequently spoken at public meetings, and spoken with considerable freedom and power; yet, notwithstanding this, when called upon to speak at a public meeting on the subject of slavery, in a strange chapel, and before a strange audience, I was so confused and fluttered, that I was not even able to read the resolution entrusted

to me, without the greatest difficulty, and was altogether unable to speak. I have frequently found myself in this situation at different periods of my life. But in chapels in which I usually preached, and before audiences I was accustomed to address, I found no difficulty in speaking. On those occasions my mind, in general, felt perfectly free, and all its powers and resources were quite at my command. On some occasions I felt exceedingly happy in my labours. I was able, in a great measure, to deliver myself even to my own satisfaction, and on some occasions the effect upon my hearers was exceedingly great. When speaking at a Missionary meeting once, in the Sunderland Circuit, the whole audience rose from their seats in an ecstasy, and joined in a loud, involuntary acclamation of praise to God. Something partially approaching to this once happened in Scotland Street Chapel at Sheffield, at a meeting of the Tract Society. I was speaking on the character of the religion of Christ, on its wonderful excellence and glory, on its beneficent power and tendency, and on its perfect adaptation to the wants of humanity. My mind was at ease. I felt myself at home. My spirit was full of light and power. My subject was glorious, and I felt myself equal to it; and the effect was such, that the meeting was greatly excited, and after the conclusion of the address a request was made that it should be published without delay. But the speech had not been written, and I never was able to write it. I had delivered it,

and it was gone beyond my control; so the speech was never made public.

From this time I began to study teetotalism more attentively, and read every work on the subject that came in my way. I bought all that Joseph Livesey had published, and borrowed all the publications on the subject in the possession of my friends. I also read a number of American publications on temperance. I had previously read a number of works on abstinence from spirits, and now began to find that almost everything previously written against spirits, was applicable to the use of intoxicating drinks generally. My reading supplied me with arguments in favour of teetotalism in abundance, as well as with a number of facts illustrative and confirmative of all I had to say on the subject. Then the oftener I spoke on the subject, the more familiar did it become. The more frequently I made use of the materials collected, the better able was I to make use of them to advantage. I also began to collect fresh materials myself. Almost every day's observation and conversation supplied me with facts tending to show the evil and danger of the drinking system, and the advantage of teetotalism. Hence, in course of time, I felt myself able to defend teetotalism, and advocate it in a way very much to my own satisfaction. I now spoke very frequently on the subject, and attended all the meetings in Chester and the neighbourhood, when my other engagements would allow me to do so. I also held meetings in the

country round about. I lectured at Hawarden, Dublin (Wales), Holywell, Greenfield, Northop, Wepre, Aldford, Tarvin, and a number of other places. I soon had invitations to attend teetotal meetings in other parts of the country ; and as far as I could, I accepted those invitations. I lectured at Nantwich, Northwich, Liverpool, Warrington, Manchester, Stockport, Ashton, Staleybridge, Sheffield, Leeds, Ripon, Denbigh, Mold, Gresford, Pentrobbin, Ruthin, Wrexham, Overton, Oswestry, Broughton, Bretton, Ruabon, Newtown (Wales), Dudley, Stourbridge, Shrewsbury, and a number of other places too many to be mentioned. During one year I attended about a hundred and fifty public meetings, and delivered about two hundred addresses. I frequently lectured during the middle of the day when I had to preach at night. I lectured both in public buildings and in the open air; in the market places, and on the tops of mountains. My audiences were generally large, especially after the first few months, and the converts to teetotalism frequently very numerous. At a meeting I held on Buckley mountain, about a year after I first went to Chester, seventeen persons signed the pledge, several of whom had been wild and lawless, turbulent and dangerous characters; and most of them, I believe, continue to act on the teetotal principle to the present time. In some cases upwards of a hundred signed the pledge at one meeting, and sometimes several hundreds signed in one day in Wales.

The effects produced by the spread of teetotalism in Wales, were truly delightful. They were glorious and blessed beyond all that I could have anticipated. Crime was diminished beyond all previous example; and in some places, where crime had been unusually prevalent, and where it had been increasing for a length of time, it appeared to be brought entirely to an end. This was the case in the neighbourhood of Mold and Ruthin. At Mold a proposition had been made, before teetotalism was introduced, to appoint a fresh constable to assist in suppressing public disorders and disturbances. The meeting, however, separated without coming to any decision on the subject, adjourning its further consideration to the following monthly meeting. When the adjourned meeting took place, and the discussion was commenced afresh, one of the farmers observed in broken English, that "they needed no other constable now; that they had got a new constable, and it was his name that was Teetotal." The fact was, the spread of teetotalism in the neighbourhood had put an almost instant and complete end to all those disorders and disturbances which had led them to contemplate the appointment of an additional constable. The improvement that had taken place in the neighbourhood led the authorities to say no more about the matter. They left the preservation of the peace and order of the neighbourhood to teetotalism, and teetotalism did the work well.

It was in the August of 1834, when about

twenty-eight years of age, that I first introduced teetotalism into Ruthin. I lectured in the Town Hall, and the Mayor of the town was chairman of the meeting. We had a tolerably numerous meeting, and the lecture was favourably received. Several signed the pledge, and a teetotal society was formed. The society set to work in earnest, and by public meetings, and the distribution of tracts, and personal influence, they succeeded in spreading the principles very rapidly, both through the town and neighbourhood. The beautiful vale of Clwyd, in which the town of Ruthin is placed, was regularly teetotalised. Twelve months after my first lecture there, I was invited to attend the anniversary of the teetotal society. It was held in the largest chapel in the town. The mayor was again in the chair. On opening the meeting, the mayor observed, that though he was no public speaker, he must state a few facts from his own knowledge, tending to show the beneficial effects of teetotalism on the morals of the people. He then referred to the meeting when teetotalism was first introduced into Ruthin. He stated that at that time crime was very prevalent in the town and neighbourhood; that a great many cases were brought before him as chief magistrate of the town; that for some time previous, the number of criminal cases brought before him had been on the increase, and the increase had been so great as to make it necessary for him both to require one or two other magistrates to assist him

in hearing and disposing of them, and to oblige him and his colleagues to sit twice as often as they had formerly been accustomed to do. But he added, that since teetotalism had begun to prevail in the town and neighbourhood, crime had gradually and rapidly diminished. Instead of sitting twice a week, the magistrates were soon enabled to get through the business that was brought before them, with sitting once a fortnight. In course of time, they were enabled to dispense with one of their fortnightly sittings,—once a month being found sufficient; and now, said he, "for a length of time, we have not had a single criminal case brought before us." The spread of teetotalism had so far regenerated and purified the neighbourhood, as to make the office of the magistrate a sinecure.

The happy effects of teetotalism upon individuals and families, were truly delightful. Hundreds and thousands of people in the different towns and villages of Flintshire and Denbighshire, blessed God that they had ever heard a teetotal lecture, or been brought to adopt a teetotal pledge. Numbers of people came to me from time to time, to thank me for my labours in the teetotal cause. Sometimes a father would come and tell me, with tears, that through my labours in the cause of teetotalism, he had been cured of drunkenness, and changed from being a curse and a torment to his family, to be a blessing and a comfort. Sometimes mothers would thank me for the influence of teetotalism upon

their husbands; and frequently husbands and wives would join together to invite me to their houses to partake of their cheer, to see the comfort in which they could live since teetotalism had come to their deliverance, and the plenty with which they were blest since they had been reclaimed from their foolish and intemperate ways.

At first I was the only advocate of teetotalism there was in Wales; but I had not laboured long, before some of the Welsh converts took the matter in hand, and began to preach it to their countrymen in their own language. When the Welsh began to advocate teetotalism in their own tongue, it spread more rapidly, and in the course of a year or two, had overrun the whole of the principality. All the preachers amongst the Welsh Methodists embraced the principle, except one, and a great number of them publicly advocated it. In some towns the drinking system was completely brought to an end. The public-houses were shut up, the beer-shop signs were pulled down, and teetotalism became the general custom of the place.

I might mention scores of individuals who were reclaimed from drunkenness through the influence of teetotalism, who continue steady and exemplary characters to this day. I might mention scores of cases in which husbands and fathers, who, by their drunkenness, had reduced themselves and their families to wretchedness, were reclaimed by teetotalism, and became a comfort and a blessing to their families. Some of those cases were of the most interesting

and cheering description. But to give them at length would be too long a story. Besides, some have been already published, and may be found in other of my writings. One poor creature, a shoemaker, called Job Thompson, had brought himself down to absolute want. He had sold his furniture. He had disposed of most of his clothes. He had changed his hat for a paper cap, and in a drunken fit, a day or so before he heard me lecture, he had lost his miserable cap. He had stuck quite fast in his business. He had nothing with which to buy leather, and no credit. Nobody would trust him. A brother of his had helped him till he found that help was of no use; and now he was given up by everyone, and left alone, in absolute wretchedness. He heard my lecture: he signed the pledge, and became a sober man. He got a job and set to work, and by some means obtained sufficient, after a while, to make a few shoes on his own account. He got paid for them, and made more. He was soon able to support himself and his wife. By-and-by he got a little furniture. His business extended, his means increased, people were disposed to aid him, and he now got settled in a little, clean, comfortable house. He one day invited me to go and take tea with him, and I went. His house was a very small one. It had only one room, and that was so narrow that I could almost stretch my arms from wall to wall. Still it held their bed, and his cobbler's seat, and a few chairs. And everything seemed clean and com-

fortable. The table was spread with all that was needful, and the happiness of the inmates, and their thanks for the benefit they had received from teetotalism, made our meeting a very agreeable one. Job still went on increasing his means, and employing them wisely, and giving God thanks for His blessings; and the last time I called on him, he was occupying a larger house, and a good front shop, and was doing a very good business in the little country town in which he lived. This is only one case out of scores and hundreds that came to my knowledge, illustrating the happy working of teetotalism.

At Chester I commenced a new class, which soon numbered twenty members or upwards, and no less than fourteen of those members were reformed drunkards. To hear the stories which some of them told of what they had suffered from drinking, and of the benefits they had experienced from teetotalism, was truly affecting. Many a time have I wept while listening to them, and given God thanks, in my tears, for the great and glorious change which teetotalism had effected in their characters and circumstances.

There was one person in the New Connexion at Chester in whom I felt more than usual interest. He was a local preacher and a class-leader, and a man in tolerable circumstances. He was, besides, a somewhat clever man. He had a good sound mind, a considerable amount of knowledge, and very considerable talents; and was of a free and generous disposition. He was made, in fact, to be something great

and nothing was wanting to render him great,—great in intellect, great in goodness, great in usefulness,—but fidelity to his own nature, and superiority to the low indulgences of sense. But he was fond of what is called good living. He was also fond of his gun. He was fond of company besides; and if not fond of drink, he used it freely when in company. It had had an evil influence both on his body and his mind. It had made him enormously stout. He had become a very unwieldy, bulky man. Walking had become a wearisome task to him, and working was not over pleasant. His love of drink had a bad influence on his mind. It had weakened his desire for improvement. He had, to a great extent, lost his taste for books. He had lost his pleasure in preaching; and though people were still delighted to hear him, whenever they had an opportunity, he seldom gave them one. And his course was downwards. He was getting worse. I was very much concerned for him, and exceedingly desirous of rescuing him, if possible, from his dangerous career. I succeeded at length in persuading him to become a teetotaler. He tried the principle for a good long time, and found it to answer exceedingly well. He lost, in the course of a few months, from twenty to thirty pounds weight. But what he lost in weight, he gained in strength. His breathing became better. He could walk better, work better, talk better, do anything better. He was more cheerful, more happy. He was in a fair way, in fact, to become a new, a

regenerated character, an exemplary and useful man. But mark what followed. My envious, malignant, or my foolish and unhappy colleague, visited him, ridiculed teetotalism, talked of its folly, spoke highly of moderation, preached loudly against excess, but spoke much of the childishness of intelligent and religious men signing pledges and running to such wild extremes. He also dwelt largely on the inhospitableness of teetotalism, and said something about its impiety and blasphemy. I heard of his arguments, but cannot remember them all. No matter; he succeeded in inducing my friend to return to his drink: and the last case of this man was worse than the first. The accounts I have heard of him since are most sad and humiliating, and whether he still be living, or whether his vices have carried him to a premature grave, I cannot tell; but his apostasy proved a dreadful matter, both to himself, his family, and his friends.

There were some violent opponents of teetotalism on the Welsh side of the Circuit, and one of them continued an opponent to the last. His name was Charles Shone. When I first went over to Hawarden, a town about seven or eight miles from Chester, I called at his house, as the preachers were accustomed to do, and there were assembled there, as was usual when the preacher came, a number of the leaders and members of the New Connexion Society in Hawarden. Charles had heard of teetotalism, and soon began to talk about it. He ridiculed the idea of people living

without ale, porter, and wine; and some of his friends who were present joined him in his ridicule. He said to me, "You don't believe what you teach about teetotalism, Mr. Barker. You can't. Now tell us honestly," said he, "are you not making fun of the people? Do you really think that wine, spirits, and porter are of no use? Nonsense," said he, "you can't." I felt little disposition to talk with him, so long as he kept in that strain; for reasoning against ridicule is like swimming, not against a stream, but against a rushing, headlong, overwhelming torrent. The most effectual answer to ridicule is silence; and I was silent for a while. At length we came to reason. Charles now had no chance. The tide went against him. I had neither the stream nor the torrent to swim against. After he had heard a great deal of what I had to say, he replied, "Yes, you can talk against anything. You can argue on any subject. You can make anything look foolish, if you like; and you can make anything look reasonable, however foolish it be. But," says he, "what could you do if you were to argue in favour of a *little drink?* You could say still more on that side if you chose." And in this style he went on for several minutes. Thomas Bennett, at that time one of Charles's companions, took his side; but he was far more rational than Charles. He laughed hard enough occasionally, to be sure; but used no banter, no insolence. He had something like fairness and honesty about him. Both Charles and Bennett were local preachers and

class leaders; they were, in fact, the leading men in the New Connexion, on the Hawarden side of the Circuit. Their opposition to teetotalism had its influence on many; but it did not prevent the people, generally, either from hearing the lectures, or from adopting the principle advocated. Bennett became a teetotaler at length, and began to advocate the cause which at first he had opposed; but Charles Shone continued to oppose it to the last.

The Society at Chester was very corrupt, and drinking had no small part in corrupting it. This made me the more resolute in my efforts to oppose the drinking system, and to promote the spread of teetotalism. One of the preachers that preceded me at Chester, the Superintendent, was a regular drunkard. I found, in going round the Circuit, that he had the reputation of a drunkard, or a very hard drinker, at almost every place. At one house, at Tarvin, the servant girl had complained of being required to fetch up drink for him so frequently, and was so provoked on one occasion, that she actually spoke aloud, as she was going down the cellar steps, saying, "He'll be drunk." The mistress of the house told me that it was no uncommon thing for him to be drunk, and that he regularly drank as much as ought to have made him drunk,—as much as would have made two or three people drunk, who were not so much accustomed to drink. After preaching, he would sit and smoke, and drink glass after glass, empty pitcher after pitcher, for hours, and then tumble into bed. In

the morning he would be coughing, and spitting, and retching, and unable to eat anything for his breakfast. He was, in fact, a regular sot. Yet he stood rather high in the Connexion, and at one time was ranked among the first, the best, and the most useful of its ministers. And I am inclined to think he erred through ignorance, rather than sinned through wickedness; that he really believed that ale and gin were essential to his health, and to the preservation of his life, and that he drank, originally at least, from no bad motives. But drink had gradually gained power over him, until it had made him at length its slave.

There seems to me to be a tendency in all kinds of intoxicating drinks, and in all kinds of exciting and intoxicating drugs, to create a fancied necessity for larger and stronger doses. I am confirmed in this by my own experience. I was once a smoker. At first I took but a few whiffs; I afterwards required half a pipe; I next came to need a whole one; it was not long before I required two; in course of time I fancied I needed one after each meal; and after a while I fancied that I needed an additional one between meals; and the demand for the exciting influence of tobacco increased to such an extent at length, that I was unable to do anything without first preparing myself with the pipe. I must have a pipe to prepare me for a journey, a pipe to cheer me on the road, and a pipe to refresh me when my journey was ended. I must have a pipe before I preached, and a pipe when I had done. I must have

a pipe before I began my studies in the morning, a pipe when I met with any difficulty in my studies, and a pipe when I had fairly surmounted the difficulty; a pipe when I had written until I was weary, and a pipe when I found myself able to write freely without weariness; a pipe when I was left alone for a while, and a pipe when company came to see me; a pipe when I was cold, and a pipe when I was hot; a pipe when I was pleased, and a pipe when I was grieved; a pipe when I was cheering myself with hopes, and a pipe when I was suffering from fears; a pipe when the sky was clear, and the sun shining bright; and a pipe when weather was dull, and the clouds dropping rain;—a pipe on all occasions, until at length the habit became a downright tyranny, and I became a wretched slave. And so it is with drink. There is the same tendency in drink as tobacco to create a desire for more. There is the same tendency in people generally, who accustom themselves to depend upon drink for cheerfulness, refreshment, excitement, or strength, to go from glass to glass, until they become tipplers, drunkards, or sots. The teetotaler is safe from these dangers; and the safety is, in my estimation, of incalculable value.

In 1835, I gave up the use of tobacco. A few months later I gave up tea and coffee, and took water as my usual drink. I received some very cutting but just remarks on my inconsistency in pressing abstinence from intoxicating drinks so earnestly on others, while I myself was guilty of

the unreasonable and offensive practice of smoking tobacco.

I had long had misgivings as to the propriety of smoking, and when I read this cutting rebuke, I resolved to smoke no more. I said to my wife, "They shall not be able to charge me with inconsistency again on that score;" and I there and then broke my pipe on the grate, and emptied my tobacco cup into the fire, and have never annoyed others, or defiled myself, with the abomination of tobacco smoke from that day to this.

These changes in my way of life gave great offence to many in the Church to which I belonged, and led them to speak and act towards me, in a way that was anything but kind and agreeable. Some called me a fool, and some a madman, and one man pronounced me no better than a suicide and a murderer. "You will be dead," said he, "in twelve months, if you persist in your miserable course, and what will become of your wife and children? And what account can you give of the people you are leading to untimely deaths by your example?"

One week-night, when appointed to preach in Chester Chapel, I gave the people a sermon on temperance. Some days after I was summoned to a meeting of officials, to give an account of my doings. I attended. My Superintendent, a bitter enemy of teetotalism, was in the chair, and on each side of him sat a number of men of similar feelings, and of grosser habits. I was told there was a complaint against me,

to the effect that the last time I was at Chester I had preached teetotalism instead of the Gospel. I said, "Is that all?" And they answered, "Yes." "Then you ought to be ashamed of yourselves," I said, and left the meeting. What they did after my departure I was never told.

During the two years I was stationed in the Chester Circuit, I received two presents, as public testimonials of gratitude for my labours in the temperance cause. One was a medal and a chain, which were presented to me in the Town Hall at Chester; another was a beautiful pocket Bible, which was presented to me in Peter Street Chapel at Manchester. The chain was afterwards sold, as I wanted money to help me in printing. The medal I gave to my wife, and she keeps it still. The Bible I myself retain, and prize it very highly. It has been of very great use to me. I used it in all my discussions with the Socialists; and have used it in all my discussions with orthodox opponents. One person, who observed with what readiness I opened the Bible on any passage I wanted, requested me to get him one like it; he was foolish enough to think there was something particular in the book itself, and that it opened at any passage I was wishful to find.

CHAPTER XVII.

CHESTER CIRCUIT (*continued*).—A CONFESSION.—DRIFTING.

I HAD two colleagues or superintendents while in Chester Circuit. The first was James Wilson, who was Superintendent the first year; the second was James Ousey, who was Superintendent the second year. James Wilson was quite a different character from James Ousey. He was cheerful, and hearty, and friendly. He was tolerant and liberal, intelligent and benevolent. He was no teetotaler, but he had no disposition to oppose teetotalism; or if he did oppose it on any occasion, it was in an open, manly, creditable, good-tempered way. But, in truth, his occasional remarks on the subject of teetotalism could hardly be called opposition. They were the remarks of a generous, open-hearted, kind individual, who, though not easily converted to teetotalism himself, was rather pleased than otherwise to see others converted. He would frequently talk with me on the subject; but never in a nasty, malignant, or intolerant manner. He would sometimes talk on the subject with others, but never in such a manner as to give much encouragement to the drunkard, or much

annoyance to the abstainer. He heard me speak on the subject of teetotalism at the first public meeting I addressed in Chester. He spoke with me afterwards on the subject of my speech, either asking a question with respect to some part of it, or proposing an objection to something I had said; but all in a friendly way. There was nothing mean, ill-natured, or discreditable in his manner. But in truth, James Wilson was altogether a superior man. He was a lump of cheerfulness, intelligence, and love. He loved all mankind; he wished all men well. He was a man of peace; he would quarrel with no one if he could help it; nor would he let others quarrel amongst themselves if he could hinder them. I have seldom met with a man in whose company I felt more at home than in his. He had a way of his own whenever he heard a pleasing story, or received any kind of agreeable intelligence, or heard anyone express a pleasing expectation, of saying, "That is comfortable." Of all the words in the dictionary, he used the word comfortable the oftenest. And the use of that word was not accidental; it was the natural result of the kind and comfortable disposition of his own soul. He was himself a comfortable man, and he took delight in seeing others comfortable; and he liked to hear that people had been comfortable; and he liked to believe that people would be comfortable; and he liked to look upon everything that happened on the comfortable side, and to believe that, however painful it was, it would have a comfortable issue. He liked

to be comfortable himself, and to see everybody comfortable about him. His looks, his words, his ways, and the manner in which he spoke his words, and the way in which he did all that he did, had something in it particularly calculated to make people comfortable. He spoke the word comfortable itself in a more pleasing and comfortable way than most people. He uttered it in such a manner, that the very sound of the word had a tendency to make those comfortable that heard it.

He was very fond of books, had a good rich library, and took great pleasure in his library. There was no man in the Connexion that had so large and so rich a collection of books as he. And many of his books were exceedingly rare. But his rare books were not peculiar for their rarity alone. They were generally peculiar for their goodness as well as their rarity. It was a rich and singularly interesting collection of books, especially for a Methodist preacher. It was quite a treat to me to look at his library, and a still greater treat to have the privilege of reading some of the works that it contained. James Wilson took great delight in his library, and made good use of it. He read his good books carefully; he understood them well, and prized their contents highly. He carried his library in his soul. No man, I believe, with whom I ever was acquainted, had more thorough knowledge of his books than poor James Wilson. He differed as much from most

people in the thoroughness of his acquaintance with his library, as his library itself differed from those of most Methodist preachers.

And he was quite as willing that his library should be useful to other people as to himself. He had nothing exclusive or niggardly about him. True, he would have felt uncomfortable at the idea of losing any of his books, but not at the thought of lending them to people who were disposed to read them and to get good from them. I never asked him for a book without receiving it, and I often received from him books without asking for them. He soon saw my taste. He discovered that I took pleasure in reading, and made it manifest that he took pleasure in ministering to my pleasure in this particular. Whenever he put his hand upon a book in his library that he thought I should like to read, he would instantly put it under his arm, put on his hat, take up his stick, and trudge along to our house. I could tell well enough as he came in that he thought he had got something extra for me. He would walk along the passage and enter the room with the most exquisitely good-natured smile on his countenance that a good old man could wear, and then, in his kind and humorous way, would give me to understand that he had got something for me; and if he found he had just met my taste, that he had brought me a book I had never seen before, and especially a book that I had wished to see, he would gently shrug up his shoulders,

smiling, and say, "Now that is comfortable; I thought you would like that; that is comfortable."

I say he was a liberal man; and so he was. His liberality was in proportion to his intelligence and benevolence. I could speak with him on any subject. I could express before him any sentiment, however heterodox, and he never was the man to complain, or take advantage of my freedom and confidence. If I uttered a secret in his hearing, it was as safe with him as with the grave. If I acted indiscreetly in his judgment in any matter, it was all the same. He might gently admonish me, or humorously reprove me, or affectionately, without anything bordering on arrogance, presumption, or insolence, or any assumption of superiority whatever, give me a word of counsel, but nothing further. A father could not be kinder towards his child than he was to me. The closest friend on earth could not be more affectionate, or faithful, or true-hearted.

But though he had all the kindness of a father, he affected nothing of a father's authority. I never met with his equal among preachers before, and I have never met with his equal since. And he was a good, clever preacher, not unusually powerful; not popular; but a good, plain, and clever preacher. He always talked sense. I never remember to have heard him utter a foolish sentence, or an unintelligible word, either in a sermon or in a public address.

And his prayers were as good as his sermons.

Both were like strings of pearls. His style was sententious, but never abrupt or obscure. It was rich, but not affected. It was a treat to hear him. I never could bear to hear a man talk long and say nothing. Nothing could be much more vexatious to me in a public speaker, than to hear him turn out big sentences without meaning, and bawl forth huge masses of words without point, or fitness, or power. And nothing could be much more agreeable, nothing could be much more comfortable, than to hear a man preach whose words were always full of meaning; whose tones were natural; and whose natural tones were those of affection and piety; and who for thirty, or forty, or fifty minutes together, would pour forth rich streams of light, and love, and joy. And this was the case, to a great extent, with Mr. Wilson.

His conduct to me was not much better than his conduct to other people. He liked me better than many, I believe; but he was kind, and good, and generous, and gentle towards all.

Thus far the story of my life was written many years ago, when I was less experienced and less considerate, and when my views were somewhat different, and as I believe, much less matured and rational than they are now. I have felt, over and over again, that when I wrote it I had but little of that wisdom which age and experience are accustomed to give, and much of that fanaticism

with which young men of sanguine and reformatory temperaments are apt to be afflicted. I can see most clearly that in judging the Churches and the priesthoods, I did not make due allowance for the weakness and imperfections of that common human nature which the best of Christians and Christian ministers are obliged to carry about with them in the present state. I can also see very clearly that in cases in which I supposed myself to be quite blameless, and regarded others only as faulty, the greater part of the faultiness belonged to me. I was wrong in supposing that Churches and preachers could not be reformed without direct and formal attacks on their special errors and vices. A preacher may be too bold as well as too timid; may use too much freedom as well as too little. And this I did. I was too impatient. I under-estimated the good that was done by indirect and vague enforcements of duty. I mistook slow change for no change at all. I also under-estimated the value of Church organizations and a regular order of religious teachers. Some things which I once thought it the duty of preachers to do, I now see clearly it is their duty not to do. But I cannot go further into particulars at present. Suffice it to say, that my views of the Churches are now more charitable and more hopeful. The fervour of youth has given place to the sober sagacity of age, and many things which I did from a sense of duty in my early days, I now see to have been indiscretions. I ought perhaps to add, that the Churches have im-

proved considerably during the last twenty years,—that some evils which were then prevalent in religious societies have almost passed away.

In writing the remaining portion I shall have the advantage of a larger experience, and of the maturing and mellowing influences of many eventful years. It may therefore be expected to prove both more instructive and more interesting than the part I am now bringing to a close.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MOSSLEY CIRCUIT, 1837.—EARLY EFFORTS AT REFORM.—DISCUSSIONS WITH THE SOCIALISTS.—DISTURBANCES IN THE SOCIETY.—HIS EXPULSION.

IN 1837, while stationed in the Mossley Circuit, I began a weekly periodical called the *Evangelical Reformer*. I had long wished for a suitable means of laying my views before my friends, but had found none. The editor of the magazine published by the body to which I belonged, was a very disagreeable man, and to me he was more unaccommodating than to others. He would have published articles under my name, but not till they were altered, and made conformable to his own ideas and tastes. And this was more than I could endure. There was another periodical which I could use, and had used occasionally, but it lent itself to ill-disposed people as a vehicle of slander, and I had ceased to feel myself at liberty to give it my countenance. With a small periodical of my own I could communicate with my friends at pleasure, and I used it for this purpose with great freedom. I published my views on temperance, marriage, trade, and

education, on dress, diet, and religious parties, on books and reading, on the use of money, on the duty of the Church to support its poor members, on toleration and human creeds, and a multitude of other subjects, and urged on all the Churches a reform. My freedom of expression soon brought me into trouble. An article which I published on "Toleration and Human Creeds," was considered by some of my brethren to be highly objectionable and dangerous, and was brought before Conference, which was that year held at Huddersfield. Conference was pressed by many to condemn the article, and to show its disapprobation of it by punishing the author. Others entreated that Conference should spare the author, lest mischief should follow, and content itself with privately expressing disapprobation of the article. The latter parties prevailed; but their moderation was made of no effect by the editor of the magazine, who wickedly published the obnoxious resolution to the world, and so rendered it necessary for me to write again on the subject, to defend myself and my article. The result was a controversy between me and some of my brethren, which led at length to the most serious consequences.

Both my periodical and my other publications were favourably received, and had a large circulation, and my opponents thought they gave me too much power, and made me dangerous; and this became the occasion of further unpleasantness. On the other hand the magazine published by the Connexion had

but a poor circulation, and the Book-room, though it had a large amount of capital, did but a very limited business; and I suggested reforms with a view to render them more useful. I urged an improvement of the magazine, and the publication of cheap books, with a view to supply useful reading to the members of the Churches, and to people generally. All these propositions proved unpalatable to easy-going officials, and brought on me fresh trials.

Again, the standard of morality was low in many of our Societies, and I pleaded for the enforcement of Christian discipline. Some of our members were publicans, some spirit merchants, some beer-shop keepers. I regarded these businesses as anti-Christian, and contended that those who persisted in them after due admonition, should be expelled. I erred with regard both to men and institutions, and my colleagues were often offended with what they deemed my unreasonable expectations and demands.

In 1837, shortly after I was stationed in Mossley, I had a public discussion with a clergyman on the propriety or lawfulness of teaching the children of the poor to write in our Sunday-schools. The clergyman contended that it was Sabbath-breaking. I mentioned that it was Christian beneficence. After the debate I published my views on the subject in a pamphlet. Some of my brethren denounced the pamphlet as heretical, and the editor of the magazine took occasion to inform his readers that my views were not the views of the body to which I belonged.

At the Conference of 1839 I was removed from Mossley to Gateshead, near Newcastle-on-Tyne. Gateshead was a comparatively new Circuit. A great part of the members had come from the Old Connexion along with Mr. Forsyth, who had been expelled, or induced to leave, if I remember right, in consequence of his inability to believe the doctrine of the eternal sonship of Christ. I got along very comfortably at Gateshead for a length of time. The large new Chapel in the town of Gateshead was filled every Sunday by an earnest congregation, and every place in the country round was well attended. The Societies also improved, and the friends both in Gateshead and in Newcastle, the Circuit on the opposite side of the Tyne, were very kind. There was nothing to hinder me from being exceedingly useful and very happy, if my wisdom had been in proportion to my great responsibilities.

Some time after my removal to Gateshead, a friend from Newcastle informed me that the Socialists were holding meetings there every Sunday, and on one or more evenings during the week as well. He had attended one of their meetings, and was surprised at the manner in which the speaker treated Christianity and the Bible. He advised me to go some time, and hear the speaker for myself, and if an opportunity was afforded, say something to counteract the mischievous tendency of his remarks. I went and heard a lecture, and offered some remarks in reply. This led to a public debate in the Lecture Room at New-

castle, which continued for several nights. The Lecture Room was crowded in every part, and the feeling awakened and brought out in favour of Christianity was most enthusiastic. The spread of Socialism was at once effectually checked, and the influence of its advocate was soon reduced to its lowest point. The news of these meetings ran quickly through the country, and I was invited to lecture on Christianity and Socialism in all the principal towns in the North of England. To enable me to comply with these invitations, I engaged, with the consent of the Gateshead Circuit, an able local preacher to take a portion of my appointments. I then went forth and lectured at Sunderland, Shields, Darlington, Stockton, Leeds, Hull, Huddersfield, Sheffield, Halifax, Bradford, Rochdale, Manchester, Oldham, Staleybridge, Ashton, Dukinfield, Stockport, Macclesfield, Liverpool, Bolton, Preston, Bury, Warrington, Staffordshire Potteries, etc., etc. After each lecture I allowed an hour for debate, and there was generally a Socialist missionary present to take advantage of the offer. In some places I had regular debates. My principal opponents were James and Alexander Campbell. Lloyd Jones kept away. Mr. Buchanan attended but once or twice. In every place I was voted triumphant, the spread of Socialism was checked, and in most cases the Socialist societies were broken up or paralysed. In less than two years the Socialist agitation was at an end.

The amount of work I did those two years was

immense. I regularly lectured five nights a week, and preached twice or thrice every Sunday. I frequently travelled from one to two hundred miles to my appointments, and back, and most of this distance outside the coach. For instance, after preaching twice at Gateshead on the Sunday, I started on Sunday night by the coach for Leeds, arriving at ten on Monday morning. From Leeds I took the coach to Manchester, and from Manchester to Bolton, where I arrived by seven o'clock in the evening. After taking a hasty tea, I began my lecture to a crowded audience, and after lecturing an hour and a half, went through an hour's debate. The lectures and debates were continued for five nights. On Friday night it was after twelve o'clock before I could get to bed. At half-past two I started in a gig to catch the earliest coach from Manchester to Leeds. From Manchester to Gateshead I rode outside the coach, a distance of one hundred and forty miles. It was in the depth of winter, and the weather was as cold as I ever remember it to have been. After twenty hours' ride in the gig and on the coach, I reached my home about half past ten at night. Next day I preached three times, and at night, or on the Monday morning, started again on my crusade against Socialism. Sometimes I spent eight days at home, and twelve away. It seems a wonder how my constitution could bear a strain so fearful and so long-continued.

At this time I was writing articles for my *Evan-*

gelical Reformer, as well as preparing materials for my "Christianity Triumphant." I also wrote and published a number of tracts and sermons. At times I wrote to the newspapers also, correcting misrepresentations of the views of the Socialists. Reports of some of my lectures and debates were published, and I was required to read and correct the reports. I had, besides, a very extensive correspondence. Ministers of almost all religious denominations wrote to me asking for information about the writings and principles of the Socialists, and proposing questions on a multitude of subjects; and in some cases I had letters from persons in high positions who wished to be satisfied with regard to the subject of Socialism; so that I was kept continually on the stretch.

As though I had not enough on hand, I was foolish enough to provoke a renewal of the unfortunate controversy between myself and my brethren on the subject of human creeds, and on those other points which had been so long and painfully discussed at the Huddersfield Conference. A report had been circulated that I had recanted some of my views at the Huddersfield Conference in order to prevent myself from being expelled. The report would probably have done me no harm, if I had been wise enough to let it alone; but I was not.

In 1840 I brought my *Evangelical Reformer* to a close. In the last number I declared my unchanged belief in the sentiments set forth in my article on "Toleration, Human Creeds, etc." I also contradicted

the reports that had been spread abroad by my enemies, to the effect that I had at the preceding Conference retracted certain expressions used in my writings with regard to justification, the witness of the Spirit, etc.; and this I did in a somewhat pugnacious and offensive spirit. I said, "If any of my opponents imagine that I have recanted a single sentence that I have published in this work, they are under some misapprehension. There is not a doctrine that I have inculcated in it that I do not still maintain. And I declare my full conviction that the resolutions which were passed in reference to me at the Ashton and Huddersfield Conferences were based in error, and that the proceedings of my opponents in this matter were uncalled-for and unchristian."

The result of this concluding article of my periodical, as most men would have foreseen, and as I myself no doubt indistinctly anticipated, was to excite and offend my opponents beyond measure, and to set them to work to devise measures either to bring me to reason, or to secure my expulsion from the Connexion. The Annual Committee was called together, and Mr. Allin, the corresponding member, published a circular intended to prepare the way for effectual measures at the approaching Conference. The Conference was to be held at Longton, Staffordshire Potteries, nearly two hundred miles away from Gateshead. On Thursday evening, only three days before the opening of Conference, a copy of Mr. Allin's circular was put into my hands. It dwelt chiefly on the subject of "human

creeds." I read it on my way to High Felling, where I was appointed to preach that evening. It seemed weak in argument, and as soon as I got home, I sat down to write a reply. Early next morning I had a tract of sixteen pages ready for the press. Before eight o'clock at night, the time I had to start for Conference, the work was printed, and after putting a number of copies in circulation in Newcastle and Gateshead, I took the rest along with me on the coach. I left a number with friends in Leeds and Huddersfield and other places as I went along.

I preached on the Sunday at Staleybridge, and saw numbers of friends from Mossley, Oldham, Ashton, and all the country round, all of whom were anxious to have, and eager to read, my answer to Mr. Allin. I got to the Conference at Longton early on Monday. My tract was at once put in circulation, and before the Conference could call me to account for my offences, it had succeeded in making a deep and very general impression in my favour among the people in the Staffordshire Circuits. I had been able to turn nearly all Mr. Allin's arguments against himself. I had also been able to strengthen my position with numerous quotations from the "Methodist Monitor," a work published by Mr. Kilham himself, the principal founder of the New Connexion. Mr. Kilham had advocated my views on the subject of human creeds, and the New Connexion had plainly been based at first on the principle, that the Bible should be the only creed or confession of faith in

which ministers should be required to declare their belief. When the matter came up for investigation, the Conference treated me with unlooked-for respect and tenderness. I was not subjected, so far as I can recollect, to any annoyance whatever. Even Mr. Allin came and conversed with me in the most friendly manner. Again an opportunity was afforded me of remaining in the Connexion with honour, and of being as useful and as happy as a man could reasonably expect to be. All reasonable, and in fact all possible, liberty was granted to me, and all that was necessary was, that I should make use of my liberty wisely. Alas for me! and alas for the Connexion! and alas for numbers who had been captivated by my writings, my sermons, my conversation, my labours in defence of Christianity against its enemies, and my general character and behaviour; I was not wise. Instead of doing my utmost to meet the views of my brother ministers, and to preserve the peace and harmony of the Connexion, I went to greater lengths than ever. I became intolerably extravagant.

In consequence of reading Clarkson's "Portraiture of Quakerism," I had come to doubt the propriety of baptizing children, and without considering the views and feelings of others, I gave up the practice, and even published a tract in opposition to water baptism altogether. Some works that had come in my way in favour of the views of the Plymouth Brethren led me to adopt the literal method of interpreting certain passages of Scripture, especially those against laying

up for ourselves treasure on earth, about selling houses and land and giving the proceeds to the poor, about the blessedness of poverty and the impossibility of people with riches entering into the kingdom of heaven, and against taking thought for the morrow, what we should eat, or drink, or wear. A belief that all such passages were binding on Christians in their strictest and most literal sense, led me to object to the Beneficent Fund for the support of aged and disabled ministers, against benefit societies, insurance companies, and all accumulations of wealth, as a means of security against future want. The adoption of the same method of interpretation led me to object to oaths, to war, and to law-suits, and ultimately to all employment of force by Christians, as a means of government. This method of interpretation further led me to object to Christians being yoked together with such as were not Christians, in banks and joint stock companies, in peace and temperance societies. In short, it led me into quite a number of childish extravagances. In a number of tracts which I published between the Longton and the Halifax Conferences, I propounded and advocated a number of those extravagances. Myself and one or two others proposed entirely to remodel the Connexion, and then to remodel all the Churches of Christendom. This, we believed, would be the means of speedily converting the world. We were thoroughly honest, and thoroughly in earnest, and daring to the last degree.

That it might not be said that I received pay from the Church for doing one kind of work while employing a portion of my time in doing another, I gave up my salary, and refused to receive anything from the Circuit, except what was given me as a free-will offering. I withdrew from the Preacher's Beneficent Society, resolved in case of sickness or old age, to trust for a supply of my wants to the providence of God.

This was more than the leading members of the Connexion and the Conference could endure. They had shown themselves willing to bear with us as far as they reasonably could, but to allow us to make ourselves so exceedingly ridiculous, and so subject the Connexion to the contempt, the pity, or the scorn of the Christian world, was out of the question.

Some time before the Halifax Conference, Mr. Allin sent round a circular to the leading and influential members of the Connexion, to prepare them for the measures contemplated with a view to remove me from the Connexion. Many unfavourable rumours also went abroad, and I published a pamphlet in self-defence entitled "Both Sides of the Question." Mr. Allin then published "A Statement of Facts," to which I replied by "A True Statement of Facts." All this time I believed myself in the right, and my opponents in the wrong, and I defended myself with so much earnestness, and with such a show of Scripture argument, that no small portion of the Connexion espoused my cause, and the ablest minis-

ters in the body found it necessary to take up arms against me. Mr. Scott, a good old minister, and a very sensible and liberal-minded man, who had often taken my part on former occasions, now published a pamphlet against me, under some such title as "Common Sense in the Business of Life not all at once to be Totally Disregarded." A friend of mine replied in a pamphlet entitled "The Foolishness of God wiser than the Wisdom of Man," in which he endeavoured to show that Christianity was not common sense, but *un*common sense. Some one, however, observed that our extravagant notions were no sense at all; and many who advocated them then, are of the same opinion now.

During the year that passed between the Conferences of Longton and Halifax, I had complained to the Connexional authorities of what appeared to me to be the mismanagement of the Book-room and its funds.

Wesley had provided cheap books and pamphlets for his Societies, and I urged Conference to do the same for ours. I said: "Our magazine and Book-room, which ought to be promoting the intellectual and religious improvement of the Connexion and the world, are doing just nothing at all, or next to nothing. The leading articles of the magazine are among the dullest and most useless things ever printed. The Book-room, which has capital enough to publish thirty or forty new books a year, does not issue one. An institution which ought to be filling

the Connexion and the country generally with the light and knowledge of Christianity, and which is capable of being made a blessing to the world at large, is allowed to stand there all the day idle."

I then proposed, that as a means of stimulating the old Book Committee and Magazine Editor to greater activity and usefulness, as well as to supply its defects, I and my friends should be allowed to publish a new periodical, and to establish a new Book-room. The probability is, that if we had shown more prudence in our proceedings and more moderation in our views, we should have been allowed in time to improve the management of the Book-room and the character of the magazine, and so to increase and extend the usefulness of the Connexion. But our fanaticisms and extravagances spoiled all.

To give all the incidents which proved the occasion of bitter feeling and alienation between me and a number of my brethren, would require a book. They were happening almost continually. When once people have ceased to regard each other with love and confidence, they can neither speak nor stir without giving offence. And this was the state to which I and several of my brethren had come. Indeed such was the unhappy state of our feelings, that we had ceased to take pleasure in pleasing, and had come almost to take delight in trying one another. Instead of coming as near together as we could, we got as far as possible apart. We came at length to feel a kind of gratification in finding what appeared

good reasons for differing from one another. The consequence was, we came at length to differ from each other so much, that it became impossible for us to work together to any advantage.

And there was no one with wisdom and piety sufficient to interpose and heal the breach, or even to prevent it getting continually worse. A gentleman who had acted as mediator and moderator when my article on "Toleration, and Human Creeds" was arraigned, and who had also brought about the temporary settlement of a more serious dispute at the Conference following, now found the case beyond his powers, and made no further attempts at reconciliation. He saw it necessary, if he would retain his influence in the body, to become a partisan, instead of a mediator, and he chose the side of my opponents. There were two other men—two of the oldest and ablest of our ministers, and two of the most exemplary Christians,—who saw the danger of the tempest that was raging, and who would have been glad to screen me from its violence, but they were afraid to interpose. They loved and esteemed me, and sympathized with many of my views; but to have attempted to save me from the fury of my opponents, would have been to risk their own reputation and position. One of them had already suffered in consequence of the freedom with which he had expressed his views, though he had written with far more caution, and acted with much more prudence than I had done; and he no doubt felt, if he could not, without so much

difficulty, save himself, it would be vain to attempt to save another, who had spoken and written with so much more freedom, and acted with so much more independence. So the storm was left to rage and spend its fury on my devoted head.

At length the Conference came, and I was called to account. The charges against me were—

1. That I had denied the Divine appointment of baptism, and refused to administer the ordinance;

2. That I had denied the Divine appointment and present obligation of the Lord's Supper;

3. That I had declared myself opposed to the Beneficent Fund;

4. That I had announced the formation of a book establishment, thereby engaging in worldly pursuits, contrary to rule, and by this means opposing the best interests of the Book-room.

The two latter charges were not pressed, and even the second was speedily given up, the one on baptism only remaining. This was pressed, and as my views on the subject were deemed intolerable, I was expelled.

There was a fearful display of bad feeling on the part of many of my opponents, and no little pressure was brought to bear on those who were opposed to extreme measures, and were disposed to give us a little longer trial, in hopes that time and reflection would bring us to more sober views and counsels. All this was perfectly natural. I and my friends regarded the leaders of the Connexion as descendants of the ancient Scribes and Pharisees who persecuted Christ,

and looked upon ourselves as prophets and righteous men who were suffering persecution for the sake of Christ and His Gospel; while the leaders of the Connexion looked on themselves as guardians of the faith and purity of the Church, and on me and my abettors as heretics whom it was their duty after the first and second admonition to reject and disown. We all meant well, but were not in a state to understand each other properly, or to make the needful allowances for each other.

The height to which the excitement rose on both sides, and the feelings with which both parties were unhappily led to regard each other, can hardly be made intelligible to our present readers, without some reference to the publications which were issued at the time, for which, at present, we have not got room. I regarded the proceedings of my opponents, from beginning to end, as dishonourable, unjust, and cruel.

I was expelled on a Saturday afternoon. I was unable to stay till the closing scene, as I had an engagement to preach anniversary sermons on the Sunday, some thirty miles away. But the news soon reached me, and I received it with strange and indescribable emotions. I felt that something very important had happened,—that I was placed in a new and untried way of life; but I little dreamt what the results would be. I expected an eventful future, but not the kind of future that was really waiting for me.

CHAPTER XIX.

TRIALS AND DIFFICULTIES.—BECOMES PASTOR OF A CONGREGATION OF BARKERITES AT NEWCASTLE.—UNSUCCESSFUL EFFORTS AT REFORM.—CELEBRATED DISCUSSION WITH WM. COOKE.—ADOPTS THE VIEWS OF THE QUAKERS.—TURNS PRINTER AND COMMENCES "THE CHRISTIAN."—BECOMES AN UNITARIAN.

I HAD not been expelled long when I found myself face to face with a terrible host of trials. Some who had promised to stand by my side took fright, and left me to my fate. Some found their interests were endangered by their attachment to me, and fell away. Some were influenced by the threats of their masters, others by the tears and entreaties of their kindred, and reluctantly joined the ranks of my enemies. Some thought I should have yielded a point or two, and were vexed at what they called my obstinacy. There were fearful and melancholy changes. People who had heretofore received me with smiles of welcome, now looked cold and gloomy. Some raged, some wept, and some embraced me with unspeakable tenderness; while others wished me dead, and said it had been better for me if I had never been born.

One man, a person of considerable influence, who had encouraged me in my movements, and joined me in lamenting the shortcomings of the Connexion, and in condemning the conduct of my opponents, no sooner saw that I was doomed, than he sent me a most unfeeling letter. I met the postman and got the letter in the street, and read it as I walked along. It pained me terribly, but it comforted me to think that it had not fallen into the hands of my delicate and sensitive wife. That no other eye might see it, and no other soul be afflicted with the treachery and cruelty of the writer, I tore it in pieces and threw it into the Tyne, and kept the matter a secret from those whose souls it might have shocked too rudely for endurance.

Another man, who had said to me a short time before my expulsion, that whoever else might close their doors against me, his would always be open, proved as faithless as the basest. I called one day at his shop; as soon as he saw me, he turned away his eyes, and stood motionless and speechless behind the counter, as if agitated with painful and unutterable passion. I saw his family move hurriedly from the room behind the shop to another room, as if afraid lest I should step forward into their presence. The man kept his door open sure enough, his *shop* door; but his heart was closed, and he never spoke to me more as long as he lived.

One day, I went with a brother of mine to the house of a tradesman near Gateshead, a member and

leading man in the New Connexion, on a matter of business. As soon as the person saw me, he began to abuse me in a very extravagant manner. I had always had a favourable opinion of the man, and quietly answered, "I can excuse your severity; for you no doubt are acting conscientiously." "That is more than I believe you are doing," he answered, and turned away.

There was great excitement throughout the whole Connexion. And while many were transported with rage, great numbers took my part. The feeling in my favour was both strong and very general. One-third of the whole Connexion probably separated from my opponents, and formed themselves into a new Society. Several ministers joined them, and had not the chapels been secured to the Conference, it is probable that the greater portion of the community would have seceded. As it was, the existence of the body seemed in peril, and the leaders found it necessary to strain every nerve to save it from utter destruction.

And they were not particular as to the means they used. Before my expulsion, even my enemies had considered me a virtuous, godly man, and acknowledged me to be a most laborious and successful minister. Now they fabricated and circulated all manner of slanderous reports respecting me. One day they gave it out that I had broken my teetotal pledge, and had been taken up drunk out of the gutter, and wheeled home in a wheelbarrow. Then

it was discovered that I had not broken my pledge, but had been seen nibbling a little Spanish juice, so it was said I was eating opium, and killing myself as fast as the poison could destroy me.

At another time it was said I had gone stark mad, and had been smothered to death between two beds. A friend came, pale and dismally sorrowful, to condole with my wife on the dreadful catastrophe, and was himself almost mad with delight when he found that I was in the parlour writing, as well and sane as usual.

Then it was reported that I had applied for a place in the ministry among the Calvinists, though I had, up to that time, professed views at variance with Calvinism, and had even objected to a hired ministry. When I called for the names of the parties to whom I had made the offer, and engaged to give a large reward if my slanderers would produce them, they found it was another Joseph that had applied for the place, and not Joseph Barker. But the death of one slander seemed to be the birth of two or three fresh ones. And sometimes opposite slanders sprang up together. "If he had been a good man," said one, "he would have stopped in the Connexion quietly, and waited for reform." "If he had been an honest man," said another, "he would have left the Connexion long ago, and not remained in a community he thought in error." I had been "too hasty" for one, and "too slow" for another.

At one time it was reported I had died suddenly

at Leeds. "After lecturing there one night," the story said, "a certain person got upon the platform to oppose me, and I was so frightened, that I first turned pale, then fainted, and in two hours breathed my last." I was preaching at Penrith, in Cumberland, some seventy or eighty miles away, at the time.

Some weeks later it was rumoured that I had destroyed myself at Otley. The maker of the tale in this case had been very particular, and given his story the appearance of great truthfulness. He said I had gone to lecture at Otley, and, on my arrival there, was found to be more than usually thoughtful and depressed. I lectured with my usual freedom and power, but seemed oppressed with some mysterious sorrow. After the lecture, instead of going along with my host, I had unaccountably disappeared, and though my friends sought for me and inquired for me all about the town, I was nowhere to be found. In the morning, as the son of my host was seeking for some cows in a wood on the side of the Chevin, he found me dead and cold, with my throat cut, and the razor in my hand with which I had done the deadly deed. The news soon spread, and my body was taken back to Otley, where an inquest was held. The verdict was that I had died by my own hand, in a fit of temporary insanity.

These stories were printed and published, and circulated through the whole country. They were shouted aloud in the street opposite my own door, in the hearing of my wife and family, during my absence.

At first my wife and children were terribly alarmed when they heard men crying, "The melancholy death of Mr. Joseph Barker." But they got so used to me dying and destroying myself in time, that they took such matters more calmly, especially as I always came again, and appeared no worse for the terrible deaths through which I had been made to pass.

The conduct of my opponents had a most injurious effect not only on my own mind, but on the minds of my wife and children. We came to look on Methodist preachers as some of the worst of men,—as the very essence or embodiment of deceit and malignity; and even our respect for Methodism itself was greatly abated. The consequence was, we were prepared to move in almost any direction that would take us further away from our old associates, and we all became, to some extent, anti-Methodistical in our sentiments.

Exciting meetings took place in almost every part of the country. The numbers attending them were so great that no room could hold them, so that I generally had to speak in the open air. And I lectured almost every night, and often through the day as well, and every lecture was followed by discussion. When opponents did not rise to assail me, friends rose to consult me, and our evening meetings often continued till nearly midnight. I preached three times on a Sunday. And after every meeting there was a crowd of friends anxious to talk

with me, or have my counsel about the formation or management of Societies. Some had heard strange stories about me, and wanted to know whether they were true or not. Others had had discussions with opponents, and wished to tell me how they had fared. Some had been puzzled with passages of Scripture quoted by my opponents, and they wished to know my views of their meaning. Some were sick and wanted my prayers. Some wanted prescriptions as well as prayers, and I was obliged to be a physician as well as a preacher and reformer. Reports of cures wrought by my means led many to believe I had the gift of healing, and sufferers sought my aid wherever I made my appearance.

While one half of each day was taken up by talking, another half was taken up by writing. I had hundreds of letters to write, and hundreds upon hundreds of all kinds of letters to read. I had, besides, a new periodical on hand (*The Christian*), for which I was expected to provide the principal part of the articles. And special attacks on me or on my views required a constant succession of pamphlets.

In addition to my press of work I had no small share of anxiety. My wife was greatly tried, and saw no prospect of a speedy end to her trials. When expelled I was living in the preacher's house, and had the preacher's furniture, and many in the Circuit considered that I had a right to them, and advised me to keep them, and set the Conference partly at defiance. I, however, refused to retain possession

of property with a doubtful title, and gave up all. And now I had not a chair on which to sit, nor a bed on which to sleep. And the little money I had was wanted for the printers. My friends provided for me in a way, but not in the way to satisfy an anxious mother. One child was taken by one family and another by another, while I and my wife were accommodated by a third. And one of the children was unkindly treated, and the rest were not content; and no house could be a home to my wife, which was not her own; and no condition could make her content while deprived of the company of her children. And I saw her heart was the seat of fearful conflicts.

I had suffered so much from the intolerance of my old colleagues that I now resolved to be subject to no authority whatever but God and my own conscience. And I kept my resolution. I would neither rule nor be ruled. The extreme of priestly tyranny had begotten the extreme of religious licence. I have seen, since, that a man may have too much liberty as well as too little; too little restraint as well as too much; and that a Church without authority and discipline must inevitably lose itself in confusion and ruin. We are none of us fit for unlimited liberty; we all need the supervision and admonitions of our Christian brethren.

After my expulsion from the Methodist New Connexion I became the pastor of a Church in Newcastle-on-Tyne, which had left the Connexion on account of

my expulsion. The trustees had legal and rightful possession of a large and nice new chapel there, and they and the other officials of the Church were both dissatisfied with the doings of Conference, and desirous of securing me as their minister. So everything was comfortably arranged. I and my friends were determined to carry out to the fullest extent in our Church what we believed to be the principles of the New Testament as laid down in my article on "Toleration, Human Creeds," etc. We would have no regular payments. All must be given freely. And it must not be collected; for that might give an opportunity to the right hand of seeing what the left hand gave. It must be dropt into a box. The result was, the generous were burdened, and the selfish relieved. And when we had our Church feasts there must be no charge. The result was, greedy persons who gave nothing consumed the provisions, while those who gave all suffered lack. We also decided to do nothing as a Church but what we could do unanimously; and the consequence was, that in order to get rid of an incurable and uncontrollable disturber, the party anxious for peace, including nine-tenths of the Church, had to withdraw from the unmanageable ones, and form themselves into a Church anew. Our proposals to support our own poor members brought in persons who probably wished for nothing beyond support. But why prolong the story of our errors? The result of all was that some came to the conclusion that Christianity, as laid down in the New Testa-

ment, was not capable of being reduced to practice. Several entered on a career of scepticism, and stopped not till they had reached its darkest extremes. The majority, however, returned in time to the Churches from which they had been detached. Many joined the Unitarians, and are members of that body still; some few went to the Quakers; some kept aloof from all Churches, but still retained their attachment to many of the liberal and practical principles to which we had given prominence.

This, however, did not change my determination to do whatever I believed to be the will of God. Nor did it dispose me to hesitate long before making a change, when it seemed called for by the teachings of Christ. On the contrary, I now resolved to speak and write and act more freely than ever. I would no longer keep my thoughts to myself till I was thoroughly convinced of their truth, but submit them to the consideration of my friends as soon as they assumed the appearance of probability. I would think aloud. I would search to the bottom of all things, and make known the result without reserve. I would throw off all restraints of prevailing creeds and customs, and enter on a career of wholesale and untrammeled investigation and discussion.

I was not in the fittest state of mind to do justice to the forms of Christianity in favour with the Churches. On the contrary, the influences to which I had long been subjected, and the peculiar state of excitement in which I was still living, could hardly fail to carry

me into extremes. No matter, I set to work. I printed thousands upon thousands of handbills, announcing a three months' free discussion in my chapel, and had them posted and distributed all round the country. Free discussion and freedom of speech were promised to all comers. Among the subjects announced for discussion were: The Trinity, The Godhead of Christ, The Atonement, Natural Depravity, Eternal Torments, Justification by Faith Alone, The Nature of Saving Faith, What is a Christian? Trust in the Merits of Christ, Instantaneous Regeneration, Christian Perfection, The Direct Witness of the Spirit, The Sabbath Question, Peace, War, and Human Governments, Law-suits, The Credit System, Toleration and Human Creeds, The Church, The Hired Ministry, Public Prayer, Public Worship generally, Preaching, Sunday Schools, Freedom of Thought, Class-Meetings, and The Duty of the Church to its Poor Members.

The chapel was kept open every day, and every day, when not called out of town, I delivered one or two lectures on one of those subjects, stating my own views on the point, and my reasons for holding them, and then calling on any one that might differ from me to state his views in reply. The chapel was generally crowded, and the discussions were often very animated. Persons of various denominations took part in them, and people came from almost every part of the country to witness the proceedings, and we had at times very exciting contests.

The records of those long-continued and strange debates are, I am sorry to say, lost. But while they were proceeding I drifted farther away on some points from the views maintained by orthodox communities. I am not aware, however, that I went further than Wesley went during the latter years of his life. I found, not only in Scripture, but in the sermons of Wesley, and in the writings of Baxter, who was a favourite with Wesley, what seemed to me fully to justify all that I had taught on the great doctrines of Christianity up to this time.

At one period I lectured frequently on Peace. The Quakers aided me in obtaining rooms for my lectures, and supplied me with money to pay my travelling expenses; and the Backhouses and Peases of Darlington, and the Richardsons and others of Newcastle, contributed to the support of my family. I met with some of the best and most agreeable people I ever knew among the Quakers. Many of them were remarkably liberal and enlightened in their views on many subjects. I was astonished at the extent of their reading, and at the amount of knowledge they possessed. And they had a wonderful amount of charity towards other religious denominations. They believed the Churches were doing much good, and rejoiced in their usefulness, though they could not always join them in their labours. I learned some useful lessons from the Quakers, and received from them many favours. I retain many pleasant recollections of my intercourse with them; and ex-

pect to think of them with pleasure to my dying day.

That I might be able to support my family without the aid of the Church, I resolved to commence business as a printer. I bought a press and type, and all the other requisites of a printing office, and set to work. Elizabeth Pease, a good kind Quakeress of Darlington, gave me thirty pounds to help me in my undertaking, and others nearer at hand assisted me according to their ability. I engaged a man to work for me, and teach me how to work myself, for I was quite a stranger to the business. I soon was able both to set up type and work the press, though the pressure of other work prevented me from excelling in either of those lines.

After I ceased to receive a salary for preaching, I and my family were often in straits, and at times we seemed on the very verge of starvation. My printing business did not pay its own expenses at first, and for several years after it began to yield a profit, the profit was required for new presses, new type, or had to lie dead in the shape of increased stock of publications. And I had no income from property. Yet in every case when we seemed to be reduced to extremities, supplies came from some quarter or other. Sometimes I knew the hand by which assistance was sent, but at other times my benefactors remained unknown. There was one good Christian who was always ready with his help. He not only aided me by many gifts, but busied himself to induce his friends

to send me aid. He gave the first subscription towards a steam press; and when the press was bought, he sent a sum to purchase the first load of coals to get up the steam to put the press in motion.

On one occasion, while I was lecturing in the south, nearly two hundred miles away, I failed to receive the supplies I expected from the agents for my publications, and my family seemed likely to be out of provisions before I could send them help. My wife and children had begun to feel uneasy and afraid. That day a man came up to the door with a cart-load of provisions. "Does Mr. Barker live here?" said the man to my eldest son, who answered the knock at the door. "Yes," answered my son. "I have brought you some things," said the man, "some flour, and potatoes, and things." "They are not for us," said the poor little fellow, "my father is away." "But this is Mr. Barker's, is it not?" said the man. "Yes," said my son. "Then it is all right," said the man, "I was told to leave them here," and he began to unload. Both children and mother were afraid there was some mistake, but the man went on unloading, and stocked the house for weeks to come.

I refused to buy paper or type or anything else on credit; and I was often at a loss, when my stock was almost out, to know where the money was to come from to get a fresh supply. Many a time when I laid myself down on my bed at night, instead of going to sleep, I spent long hours in thought about my business, looking in every direction for a prospect of

supplies to enable me to pay the wages of my men, and purchase paper. The first thing was to think of all the men that owed me money; to consider which of all the number would be likely to send me remittances in time, and to reckon up the sums to see if they would enable me to meet the demands upon me. The next thing was to do the same over again, and the next to do it over again. All this was accompanied with long and deep-drawn sighs, which were listened to by a fond and wakeful bedfellow, as restless and anxious as myself. Sometimes I moaned, and sometimes I prayed; and when I was wearied with my fruitless labours, I fell asleep. It would have been better, if I could have done it, to "give to the winds my fears," and lose myself in peaceful and refreshing slumbers; for generally on the following morning the needful supplies arrived. They seldom came from the parties from whom I expected them, but they came notwithstanding. One day, towards the close of the year, my stock of paper was very low, and I had nothing with which to purchase a fresh supply. Next morning a letter came, enclosing thirty-five pounds, a Christmas gift from friends in Ireland.

On one occasion, when I was unwell, a gentleman whom I had never seen,—and whom I have not seen yet, in fact,—sent me forty pounds, to enable me to spend a month at some hydropathic establishment. He had read a number of my publications, and had been pleased with them, and having learned in some

way that I was not well, had sent this proof of his kind regard.

There was one man in Newcastle, a wealthy man, who said to me, "Come to me whenever you are in difficulty, and you shall have whatever you need." I was often in difficulties, but hesitated to ask his help. One day, however, after having waited for supplies from other quarters as long as I durst, I went to him and stated my case. He kept me waiting an hour or more, and then said "No." I turned away ashamed and sad. A friend whom I encountered on my way home, said, "What is the matter? Are you ill? You look bad." I was obliged to tell him my story. "Is that all?" said he. "We can soon put that all right." And he gave me, unasked, as much as I needed.

I believed myself, all this time, engaged in the service of my Maker, and I regarded the arrival of seasonable help from time to time, as a proof that I was an object of His tender care, and that my labours had His smile and blessing.

By the time I had carried on my printing business for four or five years, the outlay for type and presses, and other kinds of printing apparatus, became less; while my income from the sale of books became much greater, and I found myself able at length to purchase whatever I needed as soon as it was wanted. By-and-by I had money always on hand. The relief I felt when I found myself fairly above want and difficulty was delightful beyond measure.

I now laid aside the name of Methodist and adopted that of *Christian*, and I commenced a new periodical bearing the same title. I made it, as I made my other periodicals, the organ of my own mind; the vehicle of my own thoughts on every subject of importance that engaged my attention. My writing was simply free and friendly talk with my readers on matters in which we were all greatly interested. This method of addressing my readers as friends and confidants, together with the free-and-easy style in which I wrote, helped much, no doubt, to secure for my work a considerable circulation. The work contains the history of the changes which took place in my views during the period of its publication.

While publishing *The Christian*, I published a multitude of pamphlets. I also published a work on "The Hired Ministry." My tracts on "Saving Faith" and "The Atonement," came out about the same time. In all those works there were evidences of undue excitement, and in all there are passages which in one's calmer and more candid mood, one is obliged to condemn.

Some of the publications I issued about this time, in reply to one sent forth by the Rev. (now Dr.) William Cooke, led to a public discussion between me and that gentleman, in the Lecture Room, Newcastle-on-Tyne. Mr. Cooke was a minister—the ablest minister—in the body to which I myself had formerly belonged. The list of subjects for debate included the following:—What is a Christian? What is

the Scripture Doctrine with regard to the Atonement? What is Saving Faith? What do the Scriptures teach with regard to Original Sin, or Natural Depravity, The Trinity, The Divinity of Christ, The Hired Ministry, and Future Punishments?

The discussion lasted ten nights, and every night the room was crowded to its utmost capacity. The excitement was intense. And it pervaded the whole country. There were persons present from places nearly two hundred miles distant. Hugh Miller, the Scotch geologist, was there one night, and held a conversation afterwards with some of my friends at the Inn, or Temperance Hotel, at which he stayed. He mentions the matter in one of his works, which I read at the house of Mr. F. Olmstead, in America. As usual, both parties considered themselves victorious. And both were right. Neither the truth nor the error was all on one side; nor was the argument. Christianity was something different from the creed of either party. But neither party was in a state of mind to learn from the other. War, whether it be a war of words or a war of deadlier weapons, tends generally to widen the differences and increase the antipathies of the combatants. And so it was here. And one party certainly went further and travelled faster in the way of error after this exciting contest than he had done before.

I had now for some time been gradually approaching the views of the more moderate class of Unitarians.

Some of my friends, when they saw this, became alarmed, and returned to their old associates in the orthodox communities; others got out of patience with me for moving so slowly, and ran headlong into unbelief; while the great majority still chose to follow my guidance.

Two of my Quaker friends, who had aided me in my Peace lectures, waited upon me and said that it would be necessary for me, if I meant to continue to lecture in connexion with the Peace Society, not to allow myself to be known as holding heterodox views. I answered that I would not submit to one hair's-breadth of restraint, nor to a feather's weight of pressure; and the consequence was, the withdrawal of all assistance and countenance from the orthodox portion of the Quakers in every part of the country.

The Unitarians had long been observing our movements, and when they found us coming so near their views, they began to attend our meetings, and to court our company. At first we were very uneasy at their advances, and shrank from them with real horror; but our dislike and dread of them gradually gave way. They were very kind. They lent us books, and assisted us with the loan of schools and chapels. They showed themselves gracious in many ways. And after the cruelty we had experienced from other parties, their kindness and sympathy proved very agreeable. I read their works with great eagerness, and was often delighted to find in them so many sentiments so much like my own. I had read some

of Channing's works before, and now I read them all, and many of them with the greatest delight. I read the work of Worcester on the Atonement, of Norton on the Trinity, and of Ware on a variety of subjects. I also read several of the works of Carpenter, Belsham, Priestley, and Martineau. Some of those works I published. I also published a work of Unitarian character by William Penn, "The Sandy Foundation Shaken." I came at length to be regarded by the Unitarians as one of their party. They invited me to preach in their chapels, and aided me in the circulation of my publications. I preached for them in every part of the country. I was invited to visit the Unitarians in London, and I preached in their chapels there, and was welcomed by the ministers and leading laymen of the Metropolis at a public meeting. When my friends raised a fund to purchase me a steam printing press, many Unitarians gave liberal subscriptions. Several of their leading men attended the meeting at which the press was presented, and took a leading part in the proceedings.

I had not mingled long with the Unitarians before I found that they differed from one another very much in their views. Some few were Arian, some were Socinian, and some quite Latitudinarian. Some admired Priestley, and some Carpenter, some Channing, and some Parker. Some looked on Channing as an old fogy, and said there was not an advanced or progressive idea in his writings; while others thought that everything beyond Channing

bordered on the regions of darkness and death. Some looked on the Scriptures as of Divine authority, and declared their readiness to believe whatever they could be proved to teach; others regarded the Scriptures as of no authority whatever, and declared their determination to accept no views but such as could be proved to be true, independent of the Bible. Some believed Jesus to be a supernatural person, commissioned by God to give a supernatural revelation of truth and duty, and empowered to prove the divinity of His mission and doctrine by supernatural works. Others looked on Christ as the natural result of the moral development of our race, like Bacon, Shakespeare, or Baxter. They looked on miracles as impossible, and regarded all the Bible accounts of them as fables. They were Deists. One I found who declared his disbelief in a future life. There was a gradual incline from the almost Christian doctrine of Carpenter and Channing, down to the principles of Paine and Voltaire.

Down this incline I gradually slid, till I reached at last the land of doubt and unbelief. My descent was very slow. It took me several years to pass from the more moderate to the more extravagant forms of Unitarianism.

When I first read the works of Dr. Channing, though I was delighted beyond measure with many portions of his writings, I had a great dislike for some of his remarks about Christ and the Atonement. And when I first resolved to publish an edition of

his works, I intended to add notes, with a view to neutralize the tendency of his objectionable views; but by the time I got his works into the press, those views appeared objectionable no longer. I still, however, regarded portions of Theodore Parker's works with horror, and I resolved, that if ever I published an edition of *his* works, I should add a refutation of his revolting extravagances. Yet time, and intercourse with the more advanced Unitarians, brought me in a few years to look on Parker as my model man.

Strange as it may seem, I still retained many of my old Methodistical habits and tastes and sensibilities. My mind was still imbued to a considerable extent with true religious feeling. My head had changed faster than my heart. And I still took delight in reading a number of my old religious books. And I had no disposition to indulge myself in worldly amusements. I could not be induced to go to a theatre, or even a concert. I would not play at draughts or chess. I hated cards. And all this time I held myself prepared to defend, in public discussion, what I considered to be the substance of Christianity.

It was during his visit to the Unitarians of London in 1845, previously mentioned, that my uncle became personally acquainted with Dr. Bowring, (late Sir John Bowring,) British Consul in China, and Governor of Hong-Kong, himself a man of extensive

learning and piety, as well as a poet and philanthropist. He also became intimate with William and Mary Howitt, Dr. Bateman, etc., and many other literary and political characters of eminence in their day, with some of whom he retained a close friendship to the last.

It was on this occasion that the idea of presenting him with a steam press was first started. Subsequently, at a crowded and highly respectable meeting in the Metropolis, presided over by Dr. Bowring, who was then M.P. for Bolton, it was resolved to present Mr. Barker with a steam press, in recognition of—"our pleasure and hearty satisfaction at seeing him amongst us,—our admiration of his great talents, and our gratitude for his unwearied and disinterested exertions in the cause of Religious Liberty and General Improvement."

On Monday, July 6th, 1846, the press was presented at Wortley, near Leeds, where my uncle was then residing. After partaking of a cold luncheon spread upon a table, the legs of which were composed of immense piles of tracts, Dr. Bowring made his way through the crowds who had come to witness the ceremony, and set the press in motion. He then put on the first sheet, and Dr. Bateman took it off. It was a selection from the poetical works of Dr. Bowring. Elihu Burritt, of America, was expected to be there, but did not arrive in time. The press was presented freely and unconditionally, at a cost of about £600. In the evening a public meeting was held in

the Music Hall, Leeds. Addresses were delivered by Drs. Bowring, Bateman, and others, amidst great enthusiasm, the crowd being so great that one could have literally walked on the heads of the people.

Some months previous to this, Mr. Barker had issued proposals for a "new library of three hundred volumes, the cheapest collection of works ever published." "My desire," he says, "is to spread knowledge and righteousness throughout the earth, and thus promote the present and eternal welfare of my fellow-men." He now set to work in good earnest with his new press to carry out his design. The books printed and published were on general knowledge, with a fair sprinkling of moral and religious works, distinguished by an enlightened and liberal Christianity. Amongst them were the lives of Penn, Wesley, Channing, Massillon, etc., selections from the works of Robert Hall, Isaac Barrow, and Richard Baxter, etc., the works of Rajah Rammohun Roy, selections from our principal poets, and a multitude of works on temperance, peace, war, slavery, etc., etc. The volumes were issued weekly, neatly printed, and bound in cloth, and were sold at about one shilling to one shilling and threepence each. They were the cheapest books that had ever issued from the press up to this time, and I believe the enterprise was perfectly successful, and their printer and publisher may be regarded as the pioneer and first originator of cheap literature in this country.

CHAPTER XX.

POLITICAL LIFE.—ARREST AND TRIAL.—DEPARTURE FOR AMERICA.

IN 1846 I began to dabble in politics. And my views of political subjects were as much out of the ordinary way as my views on matters pertaining to religion. I would have no King, no Queen, no House of Lords, and no State Church. I would abolish the laws of entail and primogeniture, and reduce land to a level with other kinds of property. The sale of land should be as untrammeled as that of common merchandise, and it should be as liable to be taken for debt. I broached startling views with regard to the right of property in land, and urged that as it was naturally common property, it should be considered as belonging to the nation, or Government, and made to bear the principal burden of taxation. I recommended that the property of the Church should be used for the promotion of education. I proposed to divide the country into equal electoral districts, and give to every man who was not a criminal a vote for members of Parliament. As a rule, I held up America as an example in matters of government, but objected to a senate and a four years'

president, preferring to place all power in the hands of one body, the direct representatives of the people. A committee of that body should be the *ministry*, and the chairman of that committee the president.

More extravagant or groundless notions have seldom entered the mind of man. Yet I accepted them as the true political gospel, and exerted myself to the utmost to propagate them among the masses of my countrymen. The Irish reformers demanded a repeal of the Union and the right of self-government. I advocated both repeal for Ireland and Republicanism for England. And in all my speeches and publications, I gave utterance to the bitterest reproaches against the aristocracy, and against all who took their part. I had suffered grievously in my early days. I had been subjected to all the hardships and miseries of extreme poverty. And all these sufferings I believed to have been caused by the corn and provision laws, enacted and maintained by the selfishness of the aristocracy. I regarded the aristocracy, therefore, and all who took their part, as my personal enemies; as men who had robbed me of my daily bread, and all but sent me to an untimely grave. I regarded them as the greatest of criminals. as the enemies of the human race. I considered them answerable for the horrors of the first great French Revolution, and for the miseries of the Irish Famine. I gave them credit for nothing good. True, they had allowed the Reform Bill of 1831 to pass, but not till they saw that a refusal would cause a revolution. They

had accepted free trade, but not till they saw that to reject it would be their ruin. I had not then learnt that in legislating with an eye to their own interest they had done no more than other classes are accustomed to do when they get possession of power. I had not yet discovered that the germs of selfish legislation and tyranny are sown in the hearts of all, and that the faults of the higher classes prevail among all classes under different forms. I saw the misgovernment of the parties in power, and looked no further, and I heaped on them the bitterest invectives. My passionate hatred of the privileged classes, expressed in the plainest English, and justified, apparently, by so much that was bad in the history of their doings, roused the indignation of my hearers and readers to the highest pitch. I commenced a periodical—*The People*—which at once became a favourite with the ultra-democrats, and speedily gained an extensive circulation. More than twenty thousand a week were sold.

In 1847, I foretold, in my *Companion to the Almanacs*, the French Revolution of 1848. How it happened I do not exactly know; but I have, at times, made remarkable guesses, and this perhaps was one of them. When the Revolution took place it caused a tremendous excitement in every nation in Europe. Kings and Emperors found it necessary to promise their subjects constitutional governments. It turned the heads of many people in England. Numbers who had never been politicians before

became politicians now. And many politicians who had previously been moderate in their views now became wild and revolutionary. The Chartists clamoured for "the Charter, the whole Charter, and nothing but the Charter." Meetings were held in almost every part of the country, and speeches were delivered and publications circulated of a most inflammatory character. Monster demonstrations were got up, and many who did not take part in them, encouraged them, in hopes that they would frighten the Government into large concessions to the party of reform. A meeting of the leading reformers was called in London, and I was present. Young Stansfield, now member of Parliament, etc., was there, and Sergeant Parry, and Edward Miall, and Henry Vincent, and a number of others. The Chartists arranged for a convention in London, and I was sent as a member. The meeting cut but a pitiful figure. It soon got into unspeakable disorder. The second day the question was, "What means should we recommend our constituents to use in order to obtain the reforms they desired?" Extravagant as I had shown myself on many points, I had always set myself against resort to violence. My counsel therefore was for peaceful legal measures. Ernest Jones and several others clamoured for organisation, with a view to an armed insurrection. By-and-by we got into confusion again. Some one hinted that agents of the Government were present, and that we were venturing on dangerous ground. Ernest Jones replied, "It is not for us to be afraid of

the Government, but for the Government to be afraid of us." Confusion got worse confounded. I began to be ashamed of my position. Mad as I was, I was not insane enough for the leaders of the convention, so I started home.

On Good Friday there was an immense meeting on Skircoat Moor, near Halifax, and I was one of the speakers. It was the largest assembly I ever saw. The speakers that preceded me talked about the uselessness of talk, and called for action. I spoke of the usefulness of talk, and contended that resort to violence would be both folly and wickedness. While I was speaking, a man in the crowd on my left fired a pistol, as if to intimidate me, and encourage the party favourable to insurrection. I at once denounced him as a traitor, who had come to hurry the people into crime; or a madman whom no one ought for a moment to think of imitating. The physical force men were terribly vexed at my remarks, but the mass of the meeting applauded my counsels, and the immense concourse dispersed and went home, without either perpetrating a crime or meeting with an accident.

My advocacy of peace was duly appreciated by some even of those who lamented the extravagance of my views on other subjects. Others looked on me with unmitigated horror. And the feelings of the richer classes generally against me rose to such a pitch at length, that it was hardly safe for me to go abroad after dark. My religious and political

opponents joined their forces, and seemed bent on my destruction. They believed I was undermining the foundations of society, and throwing all things into confusion. They looked on me as little better than a madman, scattering abroad firebrands, arrows, and death. And many treated me as a kind of outlaw, as a man who had no rights that anybody was bound to respect; and rude boys and reckless men took liberties with my property, and even threatened me with death. Insurance companies would not insure my property. Schoolmasters would not admit my sons into their schools, lest others should take their children away. Mothers would not allow their daughters to play with my little daughter, lest she should infect them with her father's heresies.

After the Summer Assizes in 1848, the Judge at Liverpool issued Bench warrants for the arrest of a number of political agitators, and in the list of the names of those parties, published in the newspapers, mine was included. As I had always kept within the limits of the law, and had received no visit from the police, I supposed that my name had been inserted in the list by mistake. And as I was allowed to remain at large for six weeks, I felt confident it was either some other Joseph Barker that was wanted, or that my name had been mentioned as one of the parties to be arrested in jest, or to frighten me into silence.

And the probability is, that if I had kept at home and remained quiet, I should have been permitted to go on with my business undisturbed. But that was

hardly possible. I had an engagement at the end of six weeks to give two political lectures at Bolton. Just about that time a vacancy occurred in the representation of that borough, and my friends there, without consulting me, put me forward as a candidate for the vacant seat, and announced my lectures as a statement of my political views, urging the people to come and hear me, and judge for themselves whether I was not the fittest man to represent them in the National Legislature.

I gave the first lecture on a Friday night, to a crowded and excited audience in the Town Hall; and when I had done, the people passed a resolution by acclamation, to the effect that I was just the man for them, and that they would have no other.

On the Saturday I went on into Wales, to fulfil an engagement which I had for the Sunday, and returned on Monday to give my second lecture at Bolton. When I got near the town some friends met me, and told me that the police from Manchester were looking for me, and that I had better go right home. I said, "Nay, I have never broken an engagement yet, and I won't do so now;" so I went on. As soon as I had rested myself a little I went direct to the head of the police, and asked him if he could not allow me to deliver my lecture, promising, if he wished it, to go with him quietly afterwards. He said, No, I could not be allowed to deliver my lecture, and added, that I must consider myself his prisoner. I, of course, offered no resistance, but at his request went with

him at once to the railway station. The people had already collected in the streets as I passed along, and there was soon an excited crowd at the station; but I and my friends urged them to be peaceful, and peaceful they remained. We were soon at Manchester, and I was taken at once to the City Jail, and there I passed the night in an underground cell, of the kind provided for criminals of the baser sort. It was anything but clean and sweet, and the conduct of the authorities in placing me in such a hole, when I was not even charged with any gross offence, was neither wise nor just.

It was not long before a number of friends who had heard of my arrest called to see me, and were admitted to my dungeon. They brought some food, some candles, and, as they had been informed that I had not been permitted to wash myself before being locked up, one of them, a lady, brought me a moistened towel with which to wipe my face. While these kind friends were trying to make things comfortable for me in my prison, others were running to and fro in search of bail, with a view to my speedy release. One dear good soul, Mr. Travers Madge, when he heard that I was in jail, started at once for Mossley, a distance of ten or eleven miles, to see Mr. Robinson, a faithful friend, to request him to come to my help. It was two o'clock in the morning when, weary and full of anxiety, he knocked at Mr. Robinson's door. Mr. Robinson rose as soon as he heard his voice, and took him into the house, and requested him to take some-

thing to eat, and to go to rest until daylight, promising to start with him back to Manchester by the earliest conveyance. But poor Mr. Madge could neither eat nor sleep till his friend was out of prison.

Early in the morning I was brought into court. Bail was offered at once, but the magistrates would not accept bail so early, though offered by well-known and thoroughly respectable parties. The election was to take place at Bolton that day, and the magistrates were afraid that if I were allowed to be present, there might be more excitement than would be consistent with the peace and safety of the borough. So they kept me in prison till four o'clock, when they received intelligence that the election was over, and that all was peaceful. They then set me at liberty. I went at once to Bolton, and found, sure enough, that I had been elected, and that by an immense majority. And as no one else was elected at that time, either by show of hands or a poll, I was, in truth, the only legal representative, though I never sat in Parliament.

I was soon surrounded by a vast multitude of people, to whom I gave a short address. As soon as I could get myself away from the excited crowd, I hastened home. A friend had started for Wortley as soon as I was out of prison, to inform my wife and children that I was safe and at liberty, and he was there when I arrived. It fortunately happened that my family heard of my imprisonment and liberation at the same time, and from the same lips, so that the shock they

received was not so severe as it might have been. But they were terribly tried. It would be vain to attempt to describe their feelings when they saw me enter the house. I did my best to comfort them, and assured them I should take no hurt.

I was bound over to appear to take my trial at the Winter Assizes on a charge of sedition and conspiracy, and I set to work to prepare for the event. A good kind friend residing at Barnard Castle, George Brown, Esq., who had helped me with my contests with theological opponents, helped me in this new trial. He had studied the law all his life, and was a most faithful and trustworthy adviser. He directed me what steps to take, and all his instructions proved wise and good.

My friends set on foot a subscription, to procure for me the ablest defence, and raised, in the course of a few weeks, from two to three hundred pounds. I am amazed when I look back to those days, at the number and ardour of my friends, and at the eagerness with which they hastened to my aid.

Some friends from Holbeck, in the borough of Leeds, requested me to allow myself to be put forward as a candidate for the Town Council at the approaching election. Not thinking that I should have any chance of being elected, I hesitated; but as they expressed a contrary opinion, and seemed exceedingly anxious that I should place myself in their hands, I complied with their request. They elected me by the largest number of votes that had

ever been given for a town councillor in any borough in the kingdom. My neighbours chose this method of testifying their regard for me, and of protesting against the conduct of the Government in interfering with my liberty.

At length the Assizes came. I made my appearance in court at the time appointed, with more than thirty witnesses by my side, all prepared to testify that in my lectures and public speeches I had uniformly advocated peaceful measures, and denounced everything in the shape of conspiracy, violence, or insurrection. I waited ten days for my trial, attending in court all the time. I watched the trials of other political prisoners, and was not a little discouraged to find that they were all convicted, and sentenced, generally, to lengthy terms of imprisonment. The charge against one of the prisoners was, that he had sold and circulated seditious publications. Copies of the works he was charged with circulating were brought into court. What were my feelings when I found that the publications were my own *Companion to the Almanacs*, and my weekly periodical *The People!* These works were handed about the court, and placed in the hands of the Judge. The man was convicted and sentenced to two years imprisonment. What chance was there now for me? My solicitor advised me to plead guilty, telling me I should thus get off with a lighter punishment; but I refused. Some did plead guilty, and did get off with lighter punishments than those who stood their trial;

but I was determined to have a public trial, or else be honourably discharged.

It was alarming enough to see a man convicted for selling my publications; but something still more alarming happened the following day. A most unprincipled and lying witness was brought forward by the Attorney-General. During the trial of one of the Chartist leaders he swore that he had himself formed one of a band of conspirators in Manchester, who pledged themselves to burn the city, and who had prepared the most destructive combustibles to secure the success of their horrible plot. When asked to name the parties composing the meeting at which he said he had been present, he named me as one. I was horrified. I had never seen the man before in all my life, and the idea that I should be a party to such a plot as he had described, was monstrous; but what was to hinder a prejudiced or a frightened jury from believing his testimony? Fortunately for me the Judge asked him if he could point out any of the persons he had named as parties to the conspiracy. I stood within two or three yards of him, and looked him full in the face. It was plain from the way in which his wandering eyes passed by me, that whatever other parties he might know, he did not know me. At length he pointed out a person that he said was present at the secret meeting. "What is his name?" asked the Judge. The fellow gave a name. It was not the right one. He pointed out another. "What is his name?" asked the Judge again. The

fellow gave a name. He was wrong again. The court got out of patience with the villain, and the Judge ordered him into custody to await his trial on a charge of perjury. This was an unspeakable relief both to me and to my anxious wife and friends, who had witnessed the dreadful affair with the most intense anxiety and alarm.

Some time after this horrible exhibition of baseness my solicitor came to me and told me that he had had an interview with the Attorney-General, and that he had authorised him to say, that if I would enter into bonds and give securities to keep the peace, he would not ask me to plead guilty, but set me at liberty without more to-do. He even offered, at last, to accept my own recognizances to the small amount of fifty pounds, without any other security. I refused the offer. To give bonds to keep the peace seemed like an acknowledgment that I had attempted or threatened to break the peace; and I had done no such thing. My solicitor said the offer was a very generous one, and pressed me very earnestly to accept it; my counsel did the same; but without effect. A number of friends came round me and tried to remove my objections to the measure. But all was vain. I was sorry to go against their advice, but my feeling was that to agree to the compromise proposed would be a sacrifice of principle, and would entail dishonour, and would be followed by self-reproach and shame. At last, to obtain a little respite, and to get out of the way of my importunate friends for a time, I

told my solicitor that I would lay the matter before my wife, and that whatever she might advise I would do. He agreed to this. He was satisfied that there was not a woman in the country that would not advise her husband to make a confession like that required of me, rather than see him run the risk of two or three years' imprisonment.

My wife was at Southport just then, some eighteen miles away, and it was too late for me to get to her that evening, so I had to spend the night alone in Liverpool. I went to bed, but found it impossible to sleep. My anxious mind kept turning over and over the proposal of the Attorney-General, and trying to find some good reason for accepting it; but all in vain. I had promised to be guided by my wife; but suppose she should counsel me to give the required security: could I do so and be happy? It seemed impossible. It struck twelve, it struck one—two—three, and I was still unsettled. At last I said, "I will explain my misgivings to my wife, I will tell her that I feel as if I should never be happy to consent to the compromise,—that I cannot get rid of the feeling that it would be dishonourable. And I know she will never advise me to do anything that I regard as dishonourable." As soon as I had fairly decided what to do I fell asleep. I was at Southport in the morning by the earliest conveyance, and laid the matter before my wife. "Do nothing," said she, "that you regard as a sacrifice of principle, or an act of dishonour. Whatever you believe to

be your duty, do it; I am willing to take the consequences." I answered, "I believe it my duty to insist on a trial, or an honourable discharge." "Then insist on it," said she. That was enough; I returned to Liverpool at once, and told my solicitor the result of the interview with my wife, and he communicated the intelligence to the Attorney-General. The Attorney-General was very much vexed, and, using an expression which we cannot with propriety repeat, declared that he would "make me squeak."

The result of my refusal was that the Attorney-General put off my case to the very last. On the eleventh day of the assizes I was placed in the dock with a number of prisoners who had agreed to plead guilty, and enter into bonds. My name was called at length and I refused to be bound. "Can there be any man so foolish as not to accept the mercy of Her Majesty?" said the Judge. My answer was, that I had committed no crime, and that it was justice I required, and not mercy. "I demand a trial," said I, "or an honourable discharge. I have been arrested on a charge of sedition and conspiracy, and held up before the world as a criminal, and I claim the right of justifying myself before the public, unless I am honourably discharged." The Judge said I had no need to concern myself about the public,—that the public did not concern itself about me. I answered that the public *did* concern itself about me, and that I was right in concerning myself about the public. At this point my counsel rose

and spoke of my character and position, with a view to justify my demand for a trial or an honourable discharge. The Attorney-General then applied for a postponement of my trial to the following Assizes, alleging that I was the author of a seditious and blasphemous publication. I said the statement was false, and that the Attorney-General had no right to make such a charge against me, and added that to ask a postponement after I and my witnesses had been waiting there eleven days, was most unreasonable. The Judge then asked on what grounds a postponement was desired; and when the Attorney-General stated his grounds, the Judge pronounced them insufficient. The Attorney-General then said he should enter a *nolle prosequi*. Some of my friends, when they heard this, were greatly alarmed. They supposed it to be a threat of something very terrible, and expected to see me carried away at once to prison. And some of the bystanders began to reproach me, and say I was right served for not accepting the generous offer of the Attorney-General. I, of course, knew that the Attorney-General's *nolle prosequi* meant that he would have nothing more to do with me, and that I was now free. While therefore my friends were fearing and trembling, I stood calm and comfortable. After a few moments the Judge said, "You are at liberty, and may retire."

When my friends found that I was free, they were wild with delight, and flocked round me, eager to shake me by the hand, and give me their congratula-

tions. They were now satisfied that in rejecting the proposals of the Attorney-General, I had done no more than my duty. One gentleman who had been bail for me, was extravagant enough to declare that I occupied the proudest position of any man in the country. "You have withstood the tyranny of the Government," said he, "and have triumphed." I hurried home as fast as I could, with my happy wife and my exulting friends. When we got there the cannon were roaring and the bands were playing. My workmen and neighbours had heard of my triumph, and were celebrating it in the noisiest way they could. Then followed feasting and public congratulations, both at home and in distant parts of the country, and for a time I was quite a hero.

It was about this time that my own recollections of my uncle begin. I frequently saw him, nearly every week, either at his own home or at ours, but I was too young then to take observations of character, or to understand what was taking place around me. When we went to Wortley, I remember we generally found him seated at his table writing, and when he came to Bramley we had a great deal of talking and singing. I was most struck with his vocal powers at that time. He was fond of singing, and had a good ear for music, though he was no musician. Some of the songs and tunes he used to sing still linger in my memory, and sounded at that time inexpressibly beautiful and sweet. Being an

enthusiastic Radical and Chartist, and full of romantic notions about the rights and liberties of the people, he delighted in the democratic songs both of his own and other countries, which he generally sung to appropriate music, tender and pathetic, or vivacious, as the sentiment of the song required. He had a good voice, and sang with great expression and feeling. His favourite songs were "Jennette and Jennot," "There's a good time coming," "Woodman, spare that tree," Moore's beautiful melody "Row, boatmen, Row," and one or two others. But the one that particularly took my fancy, and which still lingers in my memory as "a thing of beauty," was the "Tyrolese Evening Hymn," which he sang to a tender and touching melody, with a refrain at the end of each verse. As the poem is little known, and is worthy of a place in any collection of poetry, I shall give it in full:—

THE TYROLESE EVENING HYMN.

COME to the sunset tree;
The day is past and gone,
The woodman's axe lies free
And the reapers' work is done.
The twilight star to heaven,
And the summer dew to flowers;
And rest to us is given
By the cool, soft evening hours.
Come: come: come.

Yes, tuneful is the sound,
That dwells in whispering boughs;
Welcome the freshness round,
And the gale that fans our brows;

When the burden and the heat
Of labour's task are o'er,
And kindly voices greet
The tired one at the door.

Sweet is the hour of rest,
Pleasant the wind's low sigh;
And the gleaming of the west,
And the turf whereon we lie.
But rest more sweet and still
Than ever nightfall gave,
Our yearning hearts shall fill,
In the world beyond the grave.

There shall no tempests blow,
No scorching noontide heat;
There shall be no more snow,
No weary wandering feet.
So we lift our trusting eyes
From the hills our fathers trod,
To the quiet of the skies,
To the Sabbath of our God.

This he would sing as he walked about the room. Another favourite song of his, in which we children often used to join, was the celebrated and well-known teetotal song :—

SPARKLING and bright in its liquid light
Is the water in our glasses;
'Twill give you health, 'twill give you wealth,
Ye lads and rosy lasses.

Richer than gold is the water cold
From the crystal fountain flowing;
A pure delight both day and night
On young and old bestowing.

Oh then resign your ruby wine,
Each smiling son and daughter;
There's nothing so good for the youthful blood,
As the bright and the sparkling water.

He had now renounced the very semblance of the Christian religion, even the observance of Sunday, and was engrossed entirely in political speaking, writing, and printing. He had worked the religious vein quite out, and was little better than a Deist. His search after truth had ended in his doubting whether there was any truth at all. Truth had been like a will-o'-the-wisp—always alluring him on and on, always eluding his grasp, and at length landing him in the bottomless pit of atheism. Truths he discovered and expounded in the *Evangelical Reformer*, were found to be no truths at all when he began to publish the *Christian Investigator*. And further investigations into truth only led him to discard his former notions in the pages of *The Christian*. And by the time he had brought *The Christian* to a close, he had ceased to be a Christian altogether. He was always adopting new opinions, always advocating something fresh, always shifting his ground, so that his followers never knew what to believe or what to reject. At the outset of his career the "old body" was the repository of truth, then the New Connexion was the truth, then Quakerism claimed his affections, after that the Barkerites were the lights of the world, then Unitarianism was shown to be the true Gospel, and finally it was discovered that there was no Gospel truth at all. The most surprising thing of all was the success with which he carried out his changes of opinion, so as not to lose the confidence of his followers. Every new opinion

was supported by such an overwhelming mass of evidence, and every change was made to appear so plausible, and the new faith was advocated with such dexterity and ability, that the number of his followers increased rather than diminished. The fact was, he could make "the people" believe anything, however absurd, and did make them believe everything he advocated, until they arrived at the same goal as himself, and believed nothing. He defended the truths of Christianity against the ablest opponents of the day, and broke up the Infidel Societies all over the country; and a few years later, he worsted the ablest orthodox ministers of almost every denomination who came forth to challenge the faith of the Barkerites. It may be said, to use an expressive but vulgar term, that he had simply "the gift of the gab;" but those who ever met him in public debate on a subject, either religious, political, or social, soon discovered that he had something more than the gift of talking. He had a vast store of information on every subject he chose to speak upon, ready at his command, which continual use enabled him to marshal forth in invincible array, to the discomfiture of his enemies. He knew every argument for and against a subject before he undertook to advocate it. He was a clever biblical scholar, few men knew more about the Bible than he, and was well acquainted with the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew tongues. His theological studies had been deep, searching, and varied, and embraced every aspect of divinity. He was especially well read

in controversial theology. His bitterest orthodox opponents were obliged to concede this much to him, and it is the greatest blemish in his life and character, that in the midst of such light he chose to walk in darkness, and to employ his great learning and talents against Christianity and the true interests of his fellow-men.

When he entered the arena of politics, the same talents which had made him so prominent a figure in the religious world won him equal renown and popularity in this. There was the same simplicity and clearness of style, the same trenchant and forcible language, and the same striking and convincing manner of placing his views before the people. He possessed, in a remarkable degree, "the art of putting things," so that he could make the most reasonable and well-established opinions look erroneous and absurd, and could impart to the wildest and most extravagant notions the very semblance of sober truth. Those who ever read his work on the Church of England Prayer Book, will remember how unmercifully he handles it, how dexterously he anatomises it, literally cutting it to pieces, and all the while loading it with ridicule and contempt. The way in which he treated his political opponents was somewhat similar; and some of the candidates for the people's suffrages received from him at times severe handling. There are many living now who will still remember the great meeting in the Leeds Cloth Hall Yard, when Lord Milton came out as a representative

for, I think, the West Riding. The noble lord was young in years, and somewhat of a novice as well in political matters, and was no match for an experienced speaker and debater like Joseph Barker. After the candidate had delivered his address, my uncle began to "pearch" him, and the ridiculous and contemptible figure he was made to appear under the process, was still further heightened when my uncle, turning round and addressing the meeting, asked them whether they thought this "young man" was a fit and proper person to represent them in the Commons House of Parliament.

But he was not always allowed to have it all his own way, and sometimes met with his match. My uncle had not studied politics so deeply as he had religion, and though a giant compared with a man like Lord Milton, he was himself only a novice in comparison with a really able politician. At a political meeting in the same place some time afterwards, at which Sir Culling Eardley was one of the speakers, Joseph began to tackle the knight in the same manner as he had done Lord Milton, but he discovered he had got the wrong bull by the horns. He had got an old politician to deal with this time, instead of a young lord, and he found him to cut up rather tough; in fact, he was so rudely handled by the worthy baronet, that he retired from the contest defeated and humiliated.

In June 1847 he made a six months' tour in America, and found himself already well known there both by his lectures and writings. He had

already made up his mind to emigrate there, and exerted himself to induce his friends all over the country to follow his example. Many were carried away by his influence and writings, and induced to emigrate, and, as far as I can learn, have seen no cause to regret the step. Three of his own brothers were already there, and had found the change advantageous, and two others were preparing to follow. The Barkerites were to form a model colony to themselves, and Joseph Barker was to be the first president.

For some time previous to this, he had been advocating the anti-slavery cause with great zeal and ability. The part he took in this movement made him extremely popular in America, and when he arrived out there, he joined the anti-slavery party and became intimately associated with Mr. Lloyd Garrison, Mr. Wendell Phillips, Mr. Wright, and other leading abolitionists. His house at Wortley had been the resort of many of the anti-slavery advocates who came over to this country to plead their cause. Some of these found their way up to Bramley and lectured there, and I remember well the feelings with which I first gazed upon the dusky, though manly features of William Wells Brown and Frederick Douglass, now Marshal Douglass of Washington.

His influence and popularity had been for some time sensibly declining in this country, and he thought it would be to his advantage in many ways to make a radical change in his mode of life. He had had a most remarkable career, and an experience which

falls to the lot of but few men. For nearly twenty years he had kept the country in a constant state of excitement and disquietude, until he had almost exhausted himself, and wearied the patience of both his friends and enemies. It was a most welcome piece of news to many people when they heard he was bringing his career to a close, and preparing to leave the country. In 1851 he sailed for America, and "the country had rest."

CHAPTER XXI.

AMERICAN EXPERIENCE.—FARM LIFE.—ASSOCIATES.—FRESH TROUBLES.—REMOVES.—NEBRASKA.—PRAIRIE ADVENTURES.

IN 1851 I transported myself and my family to Central Ohio. The great excitement in which I had so long lived, and the excessive labours in which I had been so long engaged, exhausted my strength. My health failed; I thought my constitution was giving way; so I resolved to dispose of my business and go to America. It was pleasant to get away from one's religious and political opponents, but painful to part with so many devoted friends, who had proved their affection by so many sacrifices, and their steadfastness in times of so much trial; but I had hopes of keeping up my intercourse with them through the press, and of ministering to their gratification and improvement by sending them accounts of all I saw or learnt of an interesting character in the land to which I was going. I had also hopes that a quiet home in a retired and peaceful part of a new country might prove conducive to my own improvement and happiness.

One of the objects I had in view in going to America

was to obtain a little quiet for calm reflection on the course I had been so long pursuing, and a sober consideration of the position which I had reached. I was not satisfied that the changes which had taken place in my views and way of life since my separation from the Church and the ministry had all been changes for the better. I had had suspicions for some time, that amidst the whirl of perpetual excitements in which I had lived, and the continual succession of angry contests in which I had been engaged, I had probably missed my way on some points, and I wished for a favourable opportunity of ascertaining whether these suspicions were well grounded or not.

But when I got to America I found myself in a condition less friendly to a just and impartial review of my past history than the one from which I had fled. I had in the first place a farm to select, and then the purchase to make. I had then my goods to look after, my house to arrange, and food to provide. Then work wanted doing on the farm,—a hundred kinds of work, all new, and many of them hard and very perplexing. We wanted men to aid us, and men were not to be got; or, when got, were difficult to manage, and hard to please. And horses, and cows, and sheep were wanted; and poultry, and pigs, and ploughs, and harrows, and waggons, and harness. And stoves and fuel were required. And the house had to be enlarged, and the barns rebuilt, and the gardens cultivated, and the orchards replanted. And a hundred lessons had to be learnt, and a hundred more to be

unlearnt. And we were always making mistakes and sustaining losses. And our neighbours were not all that we could wish. It was impossible to avoid impositions, and difficult to take injustice quietly; so we remonstrated and resisted, and made things worse.

Before we had got ourselves fairly settled we began to be visited by a number of friends. And many of those friends were wilder and more extravagant in their views of religion and politics than myself; and instead of helping me to quiet reflection, did much to render such a thing impossible. They were mostly Garrisonian Abolitionists, with whom I had become acquainted while in England, or through the medium of anti-slavery publications. Many of them had had an experience a good deal like my own. They had been members and ministers of Churches, and had got into trouble in consequence of their reforming tendencies, and had at length been cast out, or obliged to withdraw. They had waged a long and bitter war with the Churches and ministers of their land, and many of them, if not all, had become sceptics and unbelievers of a somewhat extravagant kind. My own descent to scepticism was attributable in some measure to my intercourse with them while in England, and to a perusal of their works. The first deadly blow was struck at my belief in the supernatural inspiration of the Scriptures, by Henry C. Wright. It was in conversation with him, too, that my belief in the necessity of Church organization was undermined, and the way smoothed to that state of utter lawlessness which so

naturally tends to infidelity and all ungodliness. My respect for the talents of the abolitionists, and the interest I felt in the cause to which they had devoted their lives, and the sympathy arising from the similar way in which we had all been treated by the Churches and priesthoods with which we had come in contact, disposed me first to regard their sceptical views with favour, and then to accept them as true.

And now they welcomed me to their native land, and embraced the earliest opportunity of visiting me in my new home. And all that passed between us tended to confirm us in our common unbelief. In some of the abolitionists, anti-Christian views had led to immoral habits, which rendered their antipathy to Christianity all the more bitter. In almost all they had produced a lawlessness of speculation on moral matters, which could hardly fail to produce in the end, if it had not already produced, licentiousness of life.

And these were now my principal associates. We met at anti-slavery meetings and Bible conventions, and naturally encouraged each other in our irreligious speculations.

As soon as I had got things tolerably settled at home, I was drawn away by invitations to public meetings, anniversaries, lectures, discussions, and conventions. New books were placed in my hands, all favourable to anti-Christian views. I got new friends and new acquaintances, and all were of the doubting unbelieving class. Some of them were

atheists, and insinuated doubts with regard to the foundation of all religious beliefs. Till my settlement in America I had continued to believe, not only in God, and providence, and prayer, but in immortality; and to look on atheism as the extreme of folly. But now my faith in those doctrines began to be shaken. Instead of drawing back from the gulf of utter unbelief, and retracing my steps towards Christ, as I had partly hoped, I went further astray; and though I did not plunge headlong into atheism, I came near to the dreadful abyss, and was not a little bewildered with the horrible mists that floated round its brink.

Thus my hopes of calm and quiet thought, and of a sober reconsideration of the steps I had taken in the path of doubt and unbelief, were all, alas! exploded, and the last state of my soul was worse than the first.

To make things worse, I got into trouble with my Christian neighbours. My alienation from Christ had already produced in me a deterioration of character. I was not exactly aware of this at the time, and if I had been told of it, I might not have been able to believe it; but such was really the case. The matter is clear to me now, past doubt. I had become less courteous, less conciliatory, less agreeable. I had discarded, to some extent, the Christian doctrines of meekness and humility. My temper had suffered. I was sooner provoked, and less forgiving. I was more prompt in asserting my rights, and more prone, perhaps, to regard as rights what were no such things.

And I made myself enemies in consequence, and got into unhappy disputes and painful excitements.

I imagined, I suppose, while in England, that the disturbers of my peace were all outside me, and that when I went to America I should leave them all behind; but I see now that many of them were within me, and that I carried them with me over the sea, to my far-off Western home. And they gave me as much trouble in my new abode as they had given me in my old one. It is the state of our minds that determines the measure of our bliss. As Burns says,

> "If happiness have not her seat
> And centre in the breast,
> We may be wise, or rich, or great,
> But never can be blest.

And my heart was out of tune, and tended to put everything around me out of tune.

As I have already hinted, I had, before going to America, come to call in question the divine authority of the Bible. And now I began to advocate my obnoxious views among my new neighbours. A Methodist minister was induced to hold a public discussion with me on the subject, and as he was not well acquainted either with his own side of the question or the other, he was soon embarrassed and confounded, and obliged to retire from the contest. Not content with the retirement of my opponent, I announced a course of lectures on the Bible, resolved not to relinquish my hold of the people's attention, till I had laid before them my thoughts on the exciting subject at greater length. The company listened to

me for a time, but while I was giving my last lecture, some young men set to work outside to pull down the log school-house in which I was speaking, and I and my friends had to make haste out before the lecture was concluded, to avoid being buried before we were dead. The young men had provided themselves with a plentiful supply of rotten eggs, thinking to pelt me on my way home; but the night was very dark, and the way led through a tall, dense, shadowy forest, and somehow they mistook their own father for me, and gave him the eggs. But I was not to be permitted to escape in this way. During the night they pulled down the fences of my farm, and gave me other hints that I must leave or do worse. So I sold my farm for what I could get, and bought another some seventy miles away, in a region occupied chiefly by what in America were called "*Come-outers*,"—people who had left the Churches and the ministry, and even separated themselves from civil society, resolved to be subject to no authority but their own wills or their own whims. Among people so free as those, I thought I should have liberty in plenty; but I had not been among them long before I found they were so fond of freedom that they wanted *my* share as well as their own, and I got into trouble once more. And then I saw that the greatest brawlers about liberty, are often as bigoted, as intolerant, and as tyrannical as the greatest despots on earth.

And then the people in the district were not *all* Come-outers. Some were Christians. And these I

provoked by my disregard of the Sabbath, and by my advocacy of views unfriendly to religion and the Divine authority of the Bible. I worked in my garden or on my farm on a Sunday, in sight of my neighbours as they went to church. I called a Bible convention in the place, and took the leading part in its proceedings. I took the sceptical side in a public discussion on Christianity in the town, and gave utterance to sentiments which pained the hearts of the religious portion of my neighbours beyond endurance. The consequence was, I got into trouble again, and had to move once more, or be undone.

So I moved once more. This time I resolved to make no mistake, so I went right away beyond the limits of the States, into the unpeopled territory of Nebraska, a country at that period some ten or a dozen times as large as England, and yet containing less than five thousand white inhabitants; a region occupied chiefly by tribes of Red Indians, herds of buffalo and deer, countless multitudes of wolves, with here and there a bear, a panther, or a catamount, and heaps of rattlesnakes. And here I thought I should be safe. And so I was. The Indians gave me no trouble. I always treated them kindly, and they were kind to me in return. As for the wild beasts, God has "put the fear and dread of man upon every beast of the earth;" and as he approaches they retire. As a rule, the fiercest beasts of the forest will turn aside to make way for man. I have lived in the midst of multitudes of wolves, and taken no harm. I have

slept on the open prairie in regions swarming with wolves, and never been disturbed. I have travelled by night over the wildest mountains, the homes of panthers, bears, and catamounts, and never been molested. The rattlesnakes were the most dangerous creatures. Yet even from them I took no harm. I have walked among them time after time in slippers or low-shoes, yet I never was bitten. I slept once for three nights with a rattlesnake within two or three inches of my breast, yet escaped unhurt. God took care of me, when I neither took due care of myself nor cared as I ought for Him.

The parties I feared the most were the white people. They had heard of me, and looked upon me as a kind of mystery, if not a monster. But as I never shocked them by sceptical lectures, or by any other act of hostility to religion, they bore with me, and came at length to treat me with respect. My wife and family were regarded with favour from the first. I shall never forget the kindness of one of our Christian neighbours to my wife, in a time of affliction and sorrow.

And here, for the first time for many years, my mind was allowed to be at rest. The whirlwind of excitement in which I had lived so long began to subside, and give place to calm and quietness. And from my settlement in this desolate and far-off region I date the commencement of a change for the better in the state of my mind. My opinions did not change then, but the state of my feelings got better, which

rendered a change for the better in my sentiments possible.

But I had reached a sad extreme. I had lost all trust in a Fatherly God, and all good hopes of a better life. I had come near to the horrors of utter atheism. And the universe was an appalling and inexplicable mystery. And the world was a dreary habitation; and life a weary affair; and there were times when I wished I had never been born. Life had become to be a burden rather than a blessing, and there were seasons when the dark suggestion came to throw it down. But I said, "Nay; there are my wife and children, I will live for their sakes, if for nothing else;" and for their sakes I did live, till I had something else to live for, thank God.

If I were asked what first gave a check to my scepticism, and led me to turn my face once more towards Christ and Christianity, I should say, "The answer is supplied by my story."

In the first place, I was in a region favourable to calm and serious thought. True, we were infected for a time with the fever of speculation so prevalent in new countries; and we shared the hardships and toils, the cares and anxieties of a border life; but there were seasons when serious thoughts and salutary reflection were inevitable. I was often alone amid the quiet and solemnity of a boundless wilderness. The busy world of men was far away. There was no one near to foster doubt or unbelief, or open or irritate afresh the closing wounds inflicted by bigotry and intolerance

in days gone by. And the loneliness of my condition seemed to bring me nearer to God. It allowed the revival of those Godward-tending instincts implanted in man's heart by the hand of the Creator. It favoured the resurrection to life of the natural religious affections, and the revival of those holy longings and aspirations after a higher life and a grander destiny than earth can give, which arise so spontaneously in the breasts of men. It allowed the better self to rise and assert its power, while it shamed the evil self into the shade. And often, when away beyond the sight of man or of human habitation, amidst the eternal silence of the boundless solitude, I had strange thoughts and strange feelings; and there were times when, if I had yielded to the impulses from within, I should have cast myself down upon the ground, and adored the Great Mysterious Infinite.

On one occasion I went, in company with my youngest son and a friend, some distance into the interior of the country. At one point we came upon a deserted and decaying Indian village, and then upon an Indian track across the desert. A little farther on we struck a Mormon track, along which a company of the Latter-day Saints had groped their way towards their promised paradise in the Salt Lake Valley. As we followed the track we came upon a mound, and then upon another, marking the spot where worn-out travellers had ended their weary pilgrimage, and been consigned, amid the desolate

wilds, to their final resting-places. Into one of these unprotected graves the wolves had made their way, to feed upon the fallen victim of the new faith. When night came on it found us in these dreary and desolate wilds, and there we had to prepare to pass the night under the open sky, with multitudes of wolves around us. We had hardly spread our blankets when the sky was covered with black and heavy clouds, and lightning flashed and thunder roared, and everything betokened a night of storm and rain. We protected ourselves against the threatening elements as well as we could, and prepared ourselves for cold and drenching showers, and for a sleepless and troubled night, when, happily for us, the wind suddenly changed, and dissipated the clouds. The stars appeared in all their glory, and the night was calm and bright, and all we had to try our patience was a little frost. And there I slept, and there I often awoke; and in my intervals of wakefulness I gazed on the magnificence of the outspread skies, and mused on the dreariness of the surrounding wilderness, and thought of the stirring scenes through which I had passed in days gone by, and of the strange and deathlike, silent one in which I then was placed. "And what will the future be?" said I. "And here is my son; in the spring of life, on adventures so strange, in a universe so vast and so mysterious, and what will be his destiny? And what will be the destiny of the dear ones we have left behind?" And then I lost myself in a world of strange imaginings. When

wearied with my restless musings, I sank to rest again, and passed from waking into sleeping dreams.

Morning broke at length, and we arose, and started on our journey. The deer were skipping gaily over the plains, the wolves were hiding in their holes. We came at length to a stream, skirted by a grove, into which we made our way, and there we kindled a fire and prepared our breakfast. We filled our coffee-kettle from the brook. A hazel twig served us for a toasting fork, and we were soon engaged in one of the pleasantest parts of a hungry traveller's work. We relished our bread and ham and coffee amazingly. The wolves might be sniffing the odour of our viands, and coveting our repast; but they remained within their hiding places, and kept silent, and we finished our meal in peace. We rested next on the outskirts of a grove, on the banks of the Elkhorn river. Here I was left to take care of the stuff, to prepare a bed, and to gather wood for a fire, to cook our supper and to frighten away the wolves, and keep us warm through the night. I gathered a quantity of dry and withered grass, and spread it on the ground, and covered it with a blanket, for a bed; I then looked around for wood. I saw some down in a dark deep gully, and went to fetch it, when I found myself, all alone and unarmed, in front of a hideous wolf-hole. I retreated with all the haste I could, and was soon on the top of the bank again, panting and trembling, and endeavouring to increase the distance between mysel

and the horrible den as rapidly as I could. I next looked around for wood on safer ground, and having collected a quantity, I waited with anxiety for the return of my companions. We slept that night in a half-built and deserted cabin, without door or windows, put up by some adventurous border-man to secure a claim to a portion of the surrounding land. In the morning we started homewards. At one point a wolf looked quietly down on us by the side of a hill close by. A bigger one had passed us as we stood in front of the half-built cabin in which we had passed the night. The region abounded with them on every side. While crossing a tract of rich bottom land, where the dry and withered grass of the previous summer lay thick, I struck a light, and, for an experiment, set the prairie on fire. The flames blazed forth at once like gunpowder. They spread and roared. The wind rose, and blew the flames in the direction of our waggon. It was all we could do to get to the waggon and jump in and flee. We had no sooner started the horses than we found that the traces of one of them were loose, and we had to jump out again and fasten them; and before we could retake our places the flames were almost at our ears. The horses fled, however, at a good quick pace, and speedily carried us beyond the reach of danger.

CHAPTER XXII.

MISERABLE RESULTS OF SCEPTICISM.—DEATH OF HIS MOTHER.—LONELINESS.—ILLNESS IN HIS FAMILY.—DEPRAVITY OF UNBELIEVERS.—LECTURING TOURS.—DISSATISFIED WITH HIS POSITION.

THERE were many things in my new situation and in my strange way of life, besides the silence and the solitude of a boundless desert, that were calculated to awaken within me solemn feelings, and to arouse me to serious thoughtfulness on things pertaining to God and religion. And when once my mind had begun to awaken to such matters, it was never permitted to sink again into its former deathlike slumber. And many things befel me that tended to make me feel, and feel most painfully at times, the helplessness and cheerlessness, the gloom and wretchedness of the man who has lost his trust in God, and his hope in a blessed immortality. There is nothing in utter doubt and unbelief to satisfy a man with a heart, even in times of health and prosperity. A man, even in his best condition, wants a Father in whose bosom he can repose; a Saviour in whose care and sympathy he can trust; and a better world to which he can look forward as his final home

and resting-place. In times of great distress and grievous trial he feels the want of such consolations more keenly. It was so in my own case. When pain and loss came upon me, or when death or agony took hold of those who were dear to me, it was torture to be shut out from the consolations of religion. And pain and loss were often coming, and friends and kindred were often suffering or dying.

On one occasion a financial panic almost destroyed the value of my property, and put an end to my income. I could once have said, "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." But now I had no God. The universe had no great Fatherly Ruler. The affairs of man were governed by chance, or by a harsh and grinding necessity; and all good ground of hope and cheerful trust had given place to fear and doubt and sad uncertainty.

My youngest son was taken ill. He was racked with excruciating pain. It seemed as if the agony would drive him to distraction, or cut short his days. And there I stood, watching his agony, and distracted with his cries, unable to utter a whisper of a gracious Providence, or to offer up a prayer for help or deliverance.

Another dear one was afflicted; and again my

heart was torn, and again my lips were sealed. I could not even say to the suffering one, "God bless you."

I was called to attend the funeral of a child. The parents were in great distress, and I was anxious to speak to them a word of comfort; but doubt and unbelief had left me no such word to speak. I remembered the day when I could have said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven.

> "'They rest in Jesus, and are blest:
> How sweet their slumbers are.'"

But the happy day was gone, and I was dumb in the presence of the mourners.

I was called, on another occasion, to visit a friend, a brother sceptic, who was sick and likely to die. I had often visited him when he was well, and we had managed, on those occasions, to interest or amuse each other; but now we were helpless. Both were in sorrow, and neither could console his brother. And there we were looking mournfully on each other in the face of death, speechless and comfortless. I am horrified when I think of the dreadful position in which I was placed on those solemn occasions. It seems to me as if I had been enchanted, all those dreary days, by some malignant demon, and made the sport of his infernal cruelty. My friend, like myself, had been a Christian in his earlier days, and had rejoiced in the assurance of God's love and favour, and in hopes of future and eternal blessedness; but now he was passing away

in utter cheerlessness. He died, and I followed his remains to the grave; I spoke; but I had no great comforting truths with which to cheer the sad hearts of his weeping kindred. I looked down, with his disconsolate widow and his sorrowing children, into the dark cold vault; but could say nothing of a better life. We sorrowed as those who have no hope.

While I was in Nebraska my mother died. Like my father, who had died some years before, she had been a Christian from her early days,—a very happy one; and she continued a Christian to the last. She was one of the most affectionate and devoted mothers that ever lived, and had the happiness at one time,—an unspeakable happiness to her,—of seeing all her children, with one exception, devoted to the service of God, and several of them engaged as preachers of the Gospel. They were joyful days to her when she could get them all together, as she sometimes did, to sing with her the sweet hymns of praise and gratitude, of hope and rapture, which had cheered her so often during the years of her pilgrimage. And now she was gone. I had seen her some years before, when on a visit to my native land. She knew of my sceptical tendencies, and though she had faith in my desire to be right, she was afraid lest I should miss my way, and entreated me, with all the affectionate tenderness of an anxious mother, not to allow myself to be carried away from the faith and hope of the Gospel. "Do pray, my dear son," she said,—"do pray that God may lead you in the

right path. I want to meet you all in heaven. It would be a dreadful thing if any of you should be found wanting at last. Religion is no mistake. It is a blessed reality. I know it; I feel it, my dear son. It is the pearl of great price.", These were the last words I heard from her lips. I listened to them in silence. Though I was too far gone to be able to sympathize with her remarks as much as I ought, I was wishful that she should enjoy all the comfort that her faith would give her. She wept; she kissed me; and I left her, to see her no more on earth. I returned to my home in America, and the next thing I heard of the dear good creature was that she had finished her course. I kept the sad intelligence to myself, for my heart was too full to allow me to speak of the loss, even to those who were nearest and dearest to me. I thought of all her love for me from my earliest days, and of all her labours and sacrifices for my comfort and welfare. I remembered her counsels and her prayers. I remembered her last kind words, her kiss, and tears. It seems dreadful, but unbelief had so chilled my soul, that I could no longer indulge the sweet thought of an immortal life even for the soul of my dear good Christian mother. I had once had visions of a land of rest, a paradise of bliss, and countless crowds of happy souls, and rapturous songs, and shouts of praise, and joyous meetings of long parted friends in realms of endless life and boundless blessedness; but all were gone. A sullen gloom, a death-like stupor, a horrible and un-

natural paralysis of hope, had come in place of those celestial glories. My only comfort was, that though I had ceased to believe in the divinity of Christianity myself, *she* had retained her faith, and had lived and died in the enjoyment of its consolations.

We had a young woman living with us, with the exception of two short intervals, all the time we had been in America. She had come to regard us as her natural guardians, and we had come to look on her as one of our family. The second time she left us she caught a fever, and returned to us in hopes that in her old and quiet home she would soon be well again. We procured her medical aid, but the fever got worse. The doctor lost hopes, and it soon began to be evident that she was doomed to a speedy death. I attended her during the last sad night of her sufferings. I heard her moanings as her life drew slowly towards a close. I wanted to comfort her; but I had not the power. I could once have spoken to her of a Father in heaven, and of a better world; but I could speak of those subjects no longer. I could once have kneeled by her side and prayed; but I could pray no more. I could neither comfort myself nor my dying charge. She passed away without a word of consolation, or a whisper of hope to cheer her as she trod the dark valley of the shadow of death. I stood by, afflicted and comfortless, when her lifeless form was committed to its final resting-place, unable to speak a word of hope or consolation to the sorrowing minds that

were gathered around her grave. She was interred on the slope of the hill, on the opposite side of the stream over against my farm, within view of the field and the garden in which I often worked, and the lonely dwelling in which I frequently slept. And there she lay, far from her kindred and her native land, the wild winds moaning over her solitary grave, and no sweet word about God, or Christ, or a better life, to mark the spot where she slept. And there, on that quiet farm, and in that solitary dwelling, with that one melancholy grave in view, I passed at times the long sad days, and the still and solemn nights, in utter loneliness, gazing on the desolate scenes around, or feeding on saddening thoughts within,—"without God, and without hope in the world." I sought for comfort in a godless and Christless philosophy; but sought in vain. I tried to extort from nature some word of consolation; but not a whisper could I obtain. I tried to forge some theory of my own that might lessen the gloom in which I was wrapt; but my efforts were fruitless. I had "forsaken the fountain of living waters," and nothing remained but broken cisterns that could hold no water. I was wretched; and apart from God and Christ, and immortality, my wretchedness was incurable; and the sense of it prepared me, and ultimately constrained me, to look once more in the direction of the religion that had cheered my earlier days.

I had a great and grievous trial of another kind while in Nebraska. When we removed to that far-off

country, we left our eldest son in Ohio to look after our interests there, and to send off to us what goods we might require in our new home. The river Ohio, down which our goods had to be sent, was low at the time, and the steamer on which they were placed, while racing recklessly with another steamer, struck on a rock and was wrecked. There were over a thousand volumes of my books on board, the best and principal part of my library; nearly all my manuscripts, too, were on board, and much other property, amounting in value to twelve or thirteen hundred pounds, and nearly all was lost, or irreparably damaged. This, however, was but a light part of the trial. As soon as my eldest son got news of the wreck, he hastened to the spot, to save what portions of our property he could. The weather was hot by day, and cold by night. Both the season and the place were unhealthy, and by his great anxiety, and excessive labours, and continual exposure, he brought on a violent fever. The first information we received about the matter was that he was dying. When the dreadful news reached us, we were more than a thousand miles away. I started at once for Ohio, I took my way down the river, for four long days, and four long, dreary nights, in doubt all the time whether my child was dead or alive. And all that time I was unable to offer up a prayer, either for my son, myself, or the anxious and sorrowing ones I had left behind. My mad anti-Christian philosophy had robbed me of all. God and His providence, Christ

and His sympathy, heaven and its blessedness, were all gone, and nothing was left but the hard, blank horrors of inexorable fate. My soul was shut up as in a dungeon, unable to help itself. It was stretched on a rack, and tortured with excruciating pain. But God was merciful. I lived to reach the end of my dreadful journey, and He had spared my son. We embraced, we wept. We were spared—the whole of our family were spared, thank God—for better days, and for a happier lot.

There were other events which befel me while I was in Nebraska, that had a salutary influence on my mind. I was frequently in the greatest danger, and was as frequently preserved from harm. As I have said, I slept three nights with a rattlesnake within three inches of my breast. My eldest son slept repeatedly in the same terrible position; yet we both escaped unhurt. Once I was within an inch —within a hair's-breadth, I may say—of being killed by the kick of a horse. On another occasion, when my eldest son was forking hay in the field, and I was piling it on the waggon, he heard a rattlesnake, and looked all round upon the ground to find it, with a view to kill it; but looked in vain. At length turning his eyes upwards, he saw it writhing and wriggling on one of the prongs of his hay-fork, which he was holding up in the air. He had pierced the deadly creature while forking the hay, and I had taken the hay from the fork with my naked hands and escaped unbitten. I had quite a multitude of

escapes from deadly peril, some more remarkable than those I have described. And there were times when the thoughts of those wonderful deliverances made me feel that there were far more incredible doctrines than that of a watchful and gracious Providence.

Again. When I commenced my career of religious exploration, I expected I should get rid of all difficulties, and that I should reach a region at last where all would be light; where there would be no more harassing or perplexing mysteries. For a time my hopes appeared to get realized. The doctrines of Calvinism I threw away in a mass, and thus got rid of the difficulties connected with predestination, election, and reprobation. The difficulties connected with infinite and absolute foreknowledge I got rid of by modifying and limiting the doctrine. Many theological difficulties appeared to arise, not from the doctrines of Scripture, but from anti-Christian fictions. These I set aside without much ceremony. But when one difficulty was disposed of, another made its appearance, and in some cases several. And when I got outside the religion of Christ, more difficulties than ever made their appearance, and difficulties often of a more appalling character. The doctrine of predestination came back in the shape of Fate, or Necessity. All the great difficulties of theology had ugly likenesses in infidel philosophy. Instead of reaching a region of unsullied light, I got into one of clouds and darkness. And the further I wandered,

the blacker the clouds became, and the thicker the darkness. The difficulties, the perplexities, on the side of unbelief, were more distressing and embarrassing than those I had encountered on the side of Christianity.

Again, I was frequently tried by the characters of unbelievers. I knew that many of the older class of unbelievers had been immoral; but I supposed that modern unbelievers were of a better cast. I had seen a number of statements to that effect in books and newspapers, some of them proceeding from Christians and even from Christian ministers. I was disposed to believe that even the older infidels had not been so bad as represented. I knew that I had been belied, and I considered it probable that all who had had quarrels or controversies with members of the priesthood, had been belied in like manner. I believed, for a long time, that the loss of faith in the supernatural origin of Christianity and the Bible, had made me better instead of worse. I thought no changes had taken place in my character, but what, on the whole, were improvements. For years after I became an unbeliever, I endeavoured to practise all the unquestionable virtues inculcated in the Bible, and I supposed modern unbelievers generally did the same. And when I lectured against the Divine authority of the Bible, I disclaimed all sympathy with those who rejected the Bible because it discountenanced vice. And such was the violence of my anti-religious fanaticism, that I had actually

come to believe that infidelity, in connection with natural science, was more friendly to virtue than Christianity.

But my faith in this view met with many rude shocks when I got to America. Often when I came to be acquainted with the men who invited me to lecture, I was ashamed to be seen standing with them in the streets; and I shrank from the touch of their hand as from pollution. Though these painful discoveries did not at once convince me that infidelity was wrong and Christianity right, they were not without effect. They lessened my respect for the infidel philosophy, and prepared the way for my return to Christ. In England, where I expected, on my return home, to find unbelievers better, I found them worse. I supposed that the Secularists thought as I did with regard to virtue. I thought their object was to advance the temporal interests of mankind, and never dreamt but that they regarded virtue as the greatest of those interests. And when at length I was convinced past doubt of my mistake, the effect was terribly painful. But it was salutary. It went far towards convincing me that whether religion was founded in truth or not, it was necessary to the virtue and happiness of mankind. It prepared me still further to return to Christ, and brought me a step or two nearer to His side.

Then, again, the influences of my family were strongly in my favour. I had a wife that always loved me, and that never ceased to pray. And I

had children that grew up believers to a great extent, under the shadow of my unbelief. They had suffered, as I have already said, from the cruel treatment to which they had seen their father subjected; they had been awfully prejudiced against certain classes of ministers, if not against ministers generally; but now their prejudices were well nigh gone. And they had never been embittered against Christianity. And now they had come to feel strongly in its favour, and to look on scepticism both as a great error and a terrible calamity. My youngest son was something of a genius. He was a clever mathematician and an acute logician. And he would say to me sometimes, when he heard me uttering anti-Christian sentiments, "Father, I think you are wrong. I am sure you are wrong on that point; and if you will listen to me, I think I can convince you that you are." And I did listen. I had long been accustomed to regard my children more as friends and companions than as inferiors, and to encourage them to speak to me with all freedom. And they were kind and considerate enough to use the liberty I gave them without abusing it; so I hearkened to their remarks and remonstrances. And there were occasions on which the logic of the child proved mightier than the logic of the father; there were cases in which the father learned lessons of truth from the child he ought to have instructed. My eldest son, if not so powerful in logic, was surpassed by none in goodness and tenderness; and

if his brother excelled him in acuteness and caution, no one could excel him in devout and passionate longings for his father's return to Christ. And both these sons, and the whole of my family, exerted an influence which tended first to check the extravagances of my scepticism, and then to help and hasten my return to the truth as it is in Jesus.

Both my wife and children had wonderful patience with me in my tardy movements towards truth. When I consider how much of evil they saw in connection with infidelity, and how strong their feeling was of the truth and necessity of religion, I wonder at their forbearance. At times their patience was well-nigh exhausted. My eldest son informed me, after my return to Christ, that at one time, doubting whether I should ever be cured of my insanity, he had made up his mind to forswear all other occupations, and give himself exclusively to the Christian ministry, that he might spend his life and powers in a ceaseless warfare against the horrible delusions to which I seemed so irretrievably wedded.

In the year 1857, towards the close of the summer, I went on a lecturing tour. I had an appointment at East Liverpool in Ohio. There I met with my good old friend John Donaldson of Byker, near Newcastle-on-Tyne. He spoke of days long past, when we worked together in the cause of Christ. He was kind, as he had always been; but it troubled him to find me so changed, so estranged from the views of former times. Though glad to see my friend, the

memories which his presence revived, and the partial reawakening of old religious thoughts and feelings which it occasioned, made me feel, for a moment, an indescribable sensation, as one who had got an unlooked-for glimpse of some fearful loss he had sustained, or of some tremendous mistake he had committed. My infidel logic, however, hastened to my aid, and assured me I was right; but the deep and deathless instincts of my soul were not entirely at rest.

I reached Philadelphia at length. There I was engaged by Dr. W—— for eight months. I lectured every Sunday, sometimes on theological, sometimes on moral, and sometimes on scientific and general subjects. I always urged on my hearers a virtuous life, and did what I could to escape the society of persons of immoral habits. The gentleman by whom I was employed treated me with great respect and kindness, and many of my congregation did what they could to make me comfortable; but the longer I remained in my position, the less encouragement I saw to expect infidelity or scepticism to produce a virtuous and honourable life.

Before my term was quite expired, I was engaged by another gentleman for eight months. I had seen so much to shake my faith in the beneficent tendency of infidelity, that this time I left myself free, both to lecture on what subjects I thought best, and to leave my situation on two months' notice. As my new engagement did not commence for three months or more, I had the happiness of spending some time in

the bosom of my family. As usual, the influences to which I was subject there were all calculated to abate my faith in irreligious principles, and dispose me to look with less disfavour and prejudice on Christianity.

In August I started again for Philadelphia. I left my family with sadness and tears, and I proceeded on my journey with a feeling that it would not be long before my labours in Philadelphia would come to an end. And the feeling grew stronger every week. The Hebrews had a hard task when they were required to make bricks without straw; but he who undertakes to make people good without religion, has to make bricks without clay—and that is a vast deal harder. I felt my position was not the right one, and I longed and sighed for something more in accordance with my better feelings; but knew not exactly what it was, or where it was to be found. I frequently attended the ministry of Dr. Furness, the Unitarian minister; and though his preaching was far from being evangelical, his sermons had a salutary effect on my mind. His words about God and duty, about Christ and immortality, fell on my soul at times like refreshing dew. I also heard the Rev. Albert Barnes, and was both pleased and surprised with the truth and excellence of many of his remarks. I heard several other ministers, but the doctrines set forth by some of them exerted an influence on my mind which was the opposite of salutary.

At the end of two months I gave notice to my committee that I should give up my situation as

lecturer. I had come to the conclusion that to war with Christianity was not the way to promote the virtue and happiness of mankind, and I told my congregation so. I added, that even if the sentiments entertained by Christians were erroneous, it would be well to refrain from assailing them till we had something better to put in their place. And I also advised them, how they were about to be left without a lecturer, to go to some place of worship; and if they could not hear exactly what they could like, to make the best of what they did hear, and by all means to live a virtuous, honourable, and useful life. I gave similar advice to congregations in other places, and by many it was well received.

When I gave up my situation in Philadelphia, my intention was to return to England. I was anxious to free myself as far as possible from men of extreme views, whether in religion or politics, and to place myself in a position in which I should be perfectly free to pursue whatever course a regard to truth and duty might require. I made up my mind, therefore, that on my arrival in England I would stand alone, apart from all societies and public men, and have a paper of my own, and publish, from time to time, whatever might commend itself to my judgment as true and good. I knew I was changing, though I could not tell in what it would end. I had no idea I could ever become a Christian again, though the tendency of the change which was taking place in me was in that direction.

CHAPTER XXIII.

HIS RETURN TO ENGLAND.—THE VOYAGE.—JOINS THE SECULARISTS.—RE-READS THE BIBLE.—CHANGES IN HIS VIEWS.—DISCUSSION AT GLASGOW.—HELPS TOWARDS CHRISTIANITY.

HAVING taken leave of my friends, I hastened to Boston, and prepared for my voyage across the deep. I was to sail by the Royal Mail Steamship *Canada*, on the 11th January, 1860. Just as I was stepping on board the packet, I received a letter from my youngest son. Among a number of other kind things, it contained words like the following:—"Father, dear, when you get to England, don't dream that by any breath of yours, or by any paper balls that you can fire, you can ever shatter or shake the eternal granite foundations on which Christianity rests." Words like these from a dear good son could not but have a powerful effect on my mind.

And now I started on my voyage. I had never ventured on the sea before without dread of shipwreck and drowning. This time I had no such fear. On the contrary, as the vessel threaded her way among the rocks and islands of Boston harbour, I experienced a strange and unaccountable elevation of soul. I had

not felt so cheerful, so hopeful and so happy, for many years. And this delightfulness and joyousness of soul continued during the whole of the voyage. Yet I had never gone to sea at so dangerous a season, and I never encountered such fearful and long-continued storms. Before we had fairly lost sight of the last point of land, the winds, which were already raging with unusual violence, began to blow more furiously. They fell on us in the most fearful blasts, and roared around us in a deafening howl. The sea was thrown into the wildest uproar. The vessel was tossed and tumbled about in the most merciless manner. One moment she was plunging head foremost into the deep; the next she was climbing the most stupendous waves. Now her right wheel was vainly labouring deep in the water, while her left was spinning uselessly in the air; then her right wheel was whirling in the air, while her left was splurging in the deep. Sometimes the waves swept over the vessel, while at other times they would strike her so rudely on the side that she staggered through all her timbers. After the storm had raged for two or three days, there came what are called white squalls. A light gray cloud appears in the distance, and as it approaches you, it sends forth lightnings, accompanied with hurried bursts of thunder. A furious storm of hail or snow immediately follows. The howl of the tempest rises to a yell, and the squall, as it sweeps along in its fury, cuts off the tops of the waves, and scatters them in foam over the surface of the deep like

a mantle of snow. The first of those squalls went right through our large square sail, tearing it to shreds. Another sent a wave on board which snapped in pieces stanchions of wrought iron thicker than my arms, and carried away one of our best boats. And this unspeakable uproar of the elements continued for several days. At times I crept on deck for a few moments, and, holding by the rigging, gazed on the wild magnificence of the appalling scene. And all this time, my heart, instead of being tortured with its customary fears, was full of a cheerful, joyous confidence. It was as if some spirit of heaven had taken possession of my soul to give me sweet presentiments of the approach of better days. I was moving onwards, though I knew it not, to a happier destiny; and the peace and joy I felt were as the dawn or twilight of the coming day of my redemption.

We reached Liverpool at length, and I was soon at Betley, the native place of my wife, which was to be my temporary home. And now, if I had fallen into good hands, or if the better thoughts and tendencies of my soul had been sufficiently strong, I might have entered on a happier course. But I encountered unlooked-for difficulty. I suspected, what now I regard as past doubt, that erroneous principles of reasoning, and a defective method, and long practice in searching out flaws in arguments and detecting and exposing errors and pious frauds, had disposed me too strongly to distrust and disbelief,—that I was in fact a slave to a bad habit of faulty reasoning, as really as the drunk-

ard is the slave of his irrational appetite for strong drink. Had I, on arriving in England, found myself in favourable circumstances, my mind might have recovered its freedom, and returned in part, at least, to the faith of its earlier days. But this was not my lot. I was beset with new trials, and was doomed to further disappointments.

The Secularists had got out a prospectus of a new paper (*National Reformer?*), and I was urged to become one of its editors; and thinking that it would seem selfish and unfriendly to begin a paper of my own under such circumstances, I reluctantly consented. I, however, stipulated for full control over my half of the paper, and when I found that articles of a disgraceful and mischievous tendency were published in the other half, I published a special notice in mine, every week, that I was not answerable for those articles.

In August my wife and children arrived in England. They were sorry to find me in connection with a paper and a party of so objectionable a character, and they set themselves quietly to work to bring about a change; and it was not long before they succeeded. A book, written by a leading Secularist, was sent to me for review. When I read it, I found that its object was to undermine marriage and bring it into contempt. I at once exposed the filthy production in my portion of the paper. This led to a total separation between me and the friends of the book.

I now commenced a paper of my own, and I said to myself, and I said to my children: "I will now

re-read the Bible; I will review the history of the Church; I will examine the character and workings of the various religious denominations of the day; and whatever I find in them that is true or good, I will lay before my readers. I am not a Christian," said I, "but I will do justice to the Christian cause to the best of my ability. I have said and written enough on the sceptical side: I will see what there is to be said on the Christian side."

I had no idea of the greatness of the task I was undertaking. I supposed that eight or ten articles would be sufficient to set forth all that was true and good in the Bible. But when I came to examine the Book, of which, even in my better days, I seemed to have had but a very inadequate conception, the character of Job, as portrayed in the twenty-ninth and thirty-first chapters of the Book that goes under his name, melted me to tears. I was delighted with the purity and tenderness, the beauty and sublimity of the Psalms. I was amazed at the depth and vastness of the wisdom of the Book of Proverbs. I was pleased with the stern fidelity with which the prophets rebuked the vices and the crimes, the hypocrisy and cruelty of the sinners of their days, and the tenderness and devotion with which they pleaded the cause of the poor, the fatherless, and the widow. When I came to the Gospels, and read again the wonderful story of the Man of Nazareth, my whole soul gave way. The beauty, the tenderness, the glory of His character overpowered me. I was ashamed

that I should ever have so fearfully misconceived it, and done it such grievous injustice. The tears flowed from my eyes. But I proceeded with my task, and drew the portrait of the Saviour to the best of my ability, and sent the articles to the press. When my children read those articles in correcting the press they too wept, and said one to another, "Father is coming right; he will be himself by-and-bye." And they were right in thinking so. I had come in contact with the Great Healer. I had got a view of One on whom it was impossible to look without experiencing transformation of soul. And from this time forward I became less and less of a sceptic, and more and more of a believer in Christianity.

After I fell into doubt and unbelief, the Church and the ministry generally appeared to look on me as irretrievably lost. The great mass of them made no attempt for my recovery; and for nearly twenty years left me to wander as a sheep that had no shepherd. Many spoke and wrote against me, and some treated me with grievous injustice.

There were others, however, who took a more Christian course, and if they did not succeed in at once reclaiming me from my melancholy delusions, they produced a happy effect on my mind, which helped to bring about in the end my return to the Christian faith.

Twelve months ago last December, John Mawson Sheriff, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, was killed on the Town Moor, by a terrible explosion of nitro-glycerine. I

had been acquainted with him more than five-and-twenty years. He joined the Church at Newcastle, of which I was a minister, and remained my friend to the last. He had his doubts on certain points of theology, but he never lost his faith in the great principles of Christianity. When I was over from America once, I spent some time in his company, and we had frequent conversations on religion. "It seems to me," he said, "that we ought to put some trust in our *hearts*. My head has often tempted me to doubt; but my heart has always clung to God and immortality. It does so still; and I believe it is right. Indeed, I have no doubt of it." I remembered his words. They led me to study the moral and spiritual instincts of our nature more thoroughly than I had done before.

Another gentleman, whose conduct left a very favourable impression upon my mind, was Colonel Shaw, of Bourtree Park, Ayr, Scotland. He was a retired officer; but, being a real Christian, and a good speaker, he employed a considerable portion of his time in preaching the Gospel. How it came to pass I do not exactly remember, but it was arranged that he and I should have a public discussion on the Divine authority of the Bible. The discussion took place in the City Hall, Glasgow. The Colonel was so very kind and gentlemanly, that I found my task exceedingly difficult. It was very unpleasant to speak lightly of the faith of so good and true a man; or to say anything calculated to hurt the feelings of one so guileless and so affectionate. And many a

time I wished myself employed about some other business, or engaged in contest with some other man. At the end of the second night's debate, we were to rest two days, and the Colonel was so kind as to invite me, and even to press me, to spend those days with him, at his residence near Ayr. The Colonel had given his good lady so favourable an account of my behaviour in the debate, that she wrote to me enforcing her good husband's invitation. I went,—I could do no other. The Colonel and his venerable father met me at the station with a carriage, and I was soon in the midst of their truly Christian and happy family. Neither the Colonel nor any of his household attempted to draw me into controversy. Not a word was spoken that was calculated to make me feel uneasy. There seemed no effort on the part of any one, yet everything was said and done in such a way as to make me feel myself perfectly at home. Love, true Christian love, under the guidance of the highest culture, was the moving spirit in the family circle. A visit to the birthplace of Burns, and to the banks of Bonny Doon, was proposed, and a most delightful stroll we had, made all the more pleasant by the Colonel's remarks on the various objects of interest that came in view, and his apt and ready quotation of passages from the works of the poet, referring to the scenery amidst which we were moving.

On our return home I was made to feel at ease again, with regard to everything but myself. I felt

sorry that I should be at variance with my kind and accomplished host, on a subject of so much interest and importance as religion and the Bible. The thought that, on the evening of the coming day, I should have to appear on the platform again as his opponent, was really annoying. To talk with such a man privately, in a free and friendly way, seemed proper enough; but to appear in public as his antagonist seemed too bad. When we started from Ayr to Glasgow in the same train, and in the same carriage, I felt as if I would much rather have travelled in some other direction, or on a different errand. But an agreement had been made, and it must be kept; so two more nights were spent in discussion. But it *was* discussion,—fair and friendly discussion, and not quarrelling. Neither he nor I gave utterance to an unkind or reproachful word. When the discussion was over, the Colonel shook me by the hand in a most hearty manner in the presence of an excited audience, and presented me with a book as an expression of his respect and good feeling. I made the best returns I could, unwilling to be too much outdone by my gallant and Christian friend. The audience, divided as they were on matters of religion, after gazing some time on the spectacle presented on the platform, as if at a loss what to do, or which of the disputants they should applaud, dropped their differences, and all united in applauding both, and the disputants and the audience separated with the heartiest demonstrations of satisfaction and mutual goodwill.

The events of those days, and the impression I received of my opponent's exalted character, never faded from my memory. Their influence on my mind was truly salutary. I never think of Colonel Shaw, and his good, kind, Christian family, without affection, gratitude, and delight. He wrote to me repeatedly after my return to America, and his letters, which reached us when we were living among the wilds of Nebraska, were among our pleasantest visitants, and must be reckoned among the means of my recovery from the horrors of unbelief.

About eight years ago I lectured at Bacup. The Rev. T. Lawson, Congregational minister of Bacup, attended my lectures, and came and spoke to me afterwards, and invited me to call and see him, and dine with him. I went, and we had a lengthened conversation on matters pertaining to religion and the Church. My host exhibited a remarkable amount of Christian charity and true liberality of sentiment. He had been a reader of mine in his earlier days, when I was an advocate of Evangelical reform, and he spoke of himself as my debtor ; and he was desirous, if possible, of repaying the debt by smoothing the way for my return to Christianity. Mrs. Lawson sat and listened to our conversation in silence; but when I rose to take my leave, she bade me good-bye with unmistakable evidences of interest in my welfare, and said, as she held me by the hand, "I hope we shall meet you in heaven." I had one or two other interviews with Mr. Lawson at a somewhat later

period, and all are to be placed among the means by which I was brought to my present happy condition.

One of the first to express a conviction that I should become a Christian was an American lady whom I sometimes saw in London. She had herself been an unbeliever, but had been cured of her scepticism by spiritualism. She was then a Catholic. She gave me a medal of the Virgin Mary, and entreated me to wear it round my neck. To please her I promised to do so. But the medal disappeared before long, and what became of it I never could tell; but my friend had the satisfaction to see her prophecy fulfilled in my happy return to Christianity.

An acquaintance which I had formed with the Rev. W. Newton, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, must also be reckoned among the things which exerted an influence on my mind favourable to Christianity. Mr. Newton had been a Baptist in his earlier days, but getting into perplexity with regard to certain doctrines, he became a Unitarian. He came to feel, however, in course of time, that something more than Unitarianism was necessary to the satisfaction of his soul, and to the salvation of the world; and at the time that I became acquainted with him, he had made up his mind to leave the Unitarians. On my way into the far-off region of unbelief, I had passed through Unitarian territory, and I passed through the same territory, or near to its border, on my return to Christianity; and had it not been for my interviews with Mr. Newton, and a somewhat startling event or two

that occurred about that period, I might have lingered for a time in that cold and hungry land. Mr. Newton helped to quicken my steps, and I moved onward, and rested not till I found my way back to the paradise of my earlier days.

But, perhaps, none of the parties I have named had so powerful and beneficial an effect on my mind as one whom I have not yet mentioned. If I had been asked, seven or eight years ago, whether I supposed there was any minister in the Methodist New Connexion who regarded me with affectionate solicitude, and who was wishful for an opportunity to speak to me words of love and tenderness, I should have said, "No." Yet such was really the case.

With no one had I come in closer contact, perhaps, or in more frequent and violent collision, than the Rev. W. Cooke, now Dr. Cooke. At the time when I took my leave of the Secularists, my unpleasant feelings towards my old opponent had subsided; but I had no idea that his unpleasant feelings towards me had passed away. Yet such was the case. He had been reading my periodical for some time, and had been pleased to find that both on religion and politics I was returning, though slowly, to the views of my happier days. Some time in August 1862, he called at my office in London with a parcel of books under his arm. He had been praying for me daily for twelve months, when something seemed to say to him, "You should do something more than pray," and now he had come to try what he could do to aid the

wanderer's return to Christ. I was from home at the time, but my eldest son was in the office, and he and the Doctor became at once engaged in friendly conversation. "How like you are to what your father was four-and-thirty years ago, when I first knew him," said the Doctor. "Your father and I were great friends. It was he who first directed me to the study of Latin and Greek, which have been of great service to me; and I feel indebted to him on that account. We were afterwards separated. But I have observed, as I think, symptoms that your father is returning towards his former views." And many other kind remarks he made. At length he said, "Do you think your father would accept a copy of my works?" My son answered; "I am sure he would, with great pleasure." The Doctor left me copies of his works, kindly inscribed to me with his own hand, and with the books, he left for me a kind and Christian letter. My son lost no time in forwarding me the letter, together with an account of the pleasant but unlooked-for interview which he had had with the writer. I received the letter, and the interesting story with which it was accompanied, with the greatest astonishment and pleasure. I wrote to the Doctor, reciprocating his expressions of kindness, and making the best returns I could for the valuable present of his works. The result was a correspondence which has continued to the present time. The correspondence led to interviews, in which the Doctor exhibited all the graces and virtues that adorn the Christian gentleman.

The effect of this kindness on the part of Dr. Cooke was not only to free my mind from any remains of hurtful feelings, but to dispose and enable me to review the claims of Christianity and the Bible in a spirit of fairness and candour, and so make it possible for me to become, what I had long believed I never could become, a hearty believer in the religion of Christ.

In 1862, some friends of mine at Burnley, who had built a public hall there, engaged me as their lecturer. The parties were unbelievers, but they were opposed to the advocates of unbounded licence. They were favourable to morality, and wished to have an association that should embody what they thought good in the Church, without being decidedly religious. They wished to have music and singing at the Sunday meetings, and to limit public discussion to the week-night meetings. They also wished to have Sunday-schools, day-schools, reading-rooms, and libraries. We had come to the conclusion that the Christians were right, on the whole, in their way of conducting their public meetings, and we were resolved to imitate them as far as we honestly could. And here I lived and laboured for more than a year. We did not succeed, however, so well as we had expected. Our singers and musicians, and Sunday-school teachers, had no high and powerful motive to keep them regularly at their posts, so that whenever a strong temptation came to lure them away, they ran from their tasks, and left me and another or two to ourselves.

All the time I was at Burnley, my heart first, and then my head, were coming nearer and nearer to Christ and Christianity. I gradually gave up my opposition both to religion and the Churches. The last lecture in which I gave utterance to anything unfavourable to the Bible was one on Noah's flood. I spoke on the subject by request, and against my inclination, and before I had got half through, I began to feel unutterly dissatisfied with myself, and was really unhappy. From that time forward I dwelt chiefly on moral subjects, and often took occasion to speak favourably of the Bible and Christianity. I tried to explain what was dark, and to set forth what was manifestly true and good in their teachings.

I lectured on the wisdom of the Book of Proverbs; on the beauty of Christ's character, and the excellency of many of His doctrines; on the advantages of faith in Christ, and on the follies and vices of infidel secularism, and quite a number of other Christian subjects.

It was while living at Burnley, that I began again to pray. A young atheist died, and I was invited to his funeral, and requested to speak at his grave. When we got to the cemetery, the little chapel was occupied by another company, and we had to wait some time for our turn. My mind was in a sad and solemn mood, and I left my party and wandered to the farther end of the cemetery. It was a bright and beautiful day in April. The grass was springing fresh and green, and the hawthorn buds were opening,

and everything seemed full of life, and big with promise. The sun was shining in all his glory. The thrushes and the blackbirds were singing in the surrounding groves and thickets, and the larks were pouring forth their melody in the air. Yet all was dark and sorrowful within. I felt the misery of unbelief, but was unable to free myself from its horrible and tormenting power. I had a growing conviction that I was the slave of a vicious method of reasoning, and of an inveterate habit of doubt, and that I had not the power to do God and Christianity justice. I felt as if I ought to pray, but something whispered, "It is irrational." No matter, I could refrain no longer; and, lifting up my tearful eyes to heaven, I exclaimed, "God help me." He did help me. He strengthened my struggling soul, and gave to the good within me a growing power over the evil. I dried my tears and returned to my party. I spoke at the poor young atheist's grave, and concluded my address with the following prayer, "May trust in God, and the hope of a better life, and the love of truth and virtue, and delight in doing good, remain with those who have them, and come to all who have them not. Amen."

Among the friends who left the Church on account of my expulsion, was Samuel Methley of Mirfield, near Huddersfield. He was rather eccentric in some respects, but an honest, kind, and Christian man, a man of great faith, of much love, and much prayer. His affection and reverence for me were almost

unbounded, and so long as I remained a believer in Christ, he was ready to go with me any lengths in evangelical reform. When I ran into politics he was somewhat staggered, but followed me as far as he durst. When I began to be sceptical he stood still, afraid and very unhappy. When he found I had become an unbeliever, he resolved never to go near a meeting of mine again, and prayed to God to help him to keep his resolution. For many years he tried to wean himself from me, to extinguish his passionate regard for me; but whenever he found I was to lecture in his neighbourhood, he lost his self-control, and came, though with reluctance, and many misgivings, to my meetings. He generally rose, after the lectures, to protest against my extravagances, and to testify his uncontrollable affection for me, and his anxious desire for my salvation. When he found I was coming back to Christ, he was joyful beyond measure. When he heard me preach on true religion, he was in transports. At a meeting that followed, he spoke with so much feeling and fervour, that I was obliged to try to check him a little, for fear his excitement should injure his feeble and failing health.

At length his feeble frame gave way, and he sank into his bed to rise no more. He sent me word that he was very desirous to see me, and I visited him without delay. He was very ill. His voice was almost gone, and he spoke with great difficulty. At last he said, "Pray with me, Joseph." I had not prayed with any one for many years, but I said at

once, "I will, Sammy;" and I fell on my knees, and prayed by his side. He then, weak as he was, prayed earnestly for me, and for my wife and family.

He died a few weeks after. I preached his funeral sermon on the following Sunday, in May, 1863, in a field near the house in which he had lived and died, from the text, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." There was an immense congregation, consisting of people of all denominations, both infidel and Christian, from every part of the surrounding district. When speaking of his conduct in clinging to the religion of Christ, instead of following me into the region of doubt and unbelief, I declared my conviction that he was right. The loving, trusting Christian is right. The religion of Jesus is substantially true and Divine; and thus far, I declare myself a Christian.

It was a beautiful day. The sun shone bright, and the winds were low, and the vast congregation was orderly and attentive, and many were much affected. The report that I had declared myself a Christian, without any qualification annexed, got into the papers, and ran through the country. To many it gave the greatest satisfaction. Good, kind Christians came round me wherever I went, testifying their delight and gratitude. Unbelievers were greatly annoyed at the tidings of my conversion, and some of them came and entreated me to give the report a public contradiction. This I refused to do. Twice the papers said somewhat more than I had said, but

the statement they gave was true in substance, and the growing change for the better in my views and feelings soon made it true in form.

The first Christians that invited me to preach were the Methodist Reformers of Wolverhampton. The next were the Primitive Methodists of Bilston and Tunstall. The Primitive Methodists at Tunstall invited me to join their community, and as soon as I consistently could, I did so. I was afterwards accepted as a local preacher. My labours as a preacher and lecturer have been mostly in connection with that community. I was especially struck with the zeal, the labours, and the usefulness of the Primitive Methodists while on my way from the wilds of error; and my intercourse with its ministers and members, since I became a Christian, has proved to me an unspeakable comfort and blessing. I have received from them the greatest kindness: and I pray God that I may prove a comfort and blessing to them in return.

I began to preach before I was fit; but I never might have been fit if I had not begun. I became fit by working while unfit. And my imperfect labours proved a blessing to many.

There was much prejudice against me at first, but not more than I had reason to expect, and it gradually gave place to confidence and kind feeling. Some said I ought to remain silent a few years; but as I did not know what a few years or even a few days might bring forth, I thought it best to speak at

once. I had spoken freely enough on the wrong side, and saw no reason why I should not speak as freely, and at once, on the right side. Nor do I regret the course I took. It was the best. Some that thought otherwise, at first, think as I do now.

There are some things which we cannot see in their true light, till we get some distance from them. I never properly saw the danger of using intoxicating drinks, till I had been some time a teetotaler. I never properly saw the folly, the filthiness, and the wickedness of smoking tobacco, till some years after I had given up the practice. And I never properly saw the horribleness of infidelity, and the awful madness of my conduct in taking part with the enemies of Christianity, till I had been some time a Christian.

There are some things with regard to which I think and feel as I did over thirty years ago. I can see nothing seriously wrong in my articles in the *Evangelical Reformer*. I think the prosecution of those articles was a great mistake. I still think the doctrines which I held and taught at that time were Methodistical, true, and Scriptural, and that the complaints made against them were unreasonable. I think my practical style of preaching was the right one, and find myself unable to adopt any other. The theological style seems to me as unscriptural and foolish as it ever did. And I still judge of the value of preaching by the effects which it produces.

I consider that the great business of a Christian minister is to make bad men into good men, and

good men better, and so fit them for all the duties and all the blessedness for which they were created; to bring them to fear and love God, and make them perfect in every good work to do His will. And how any one can study Christianity without perceiving this, is a mystery to me. The preaching which tends to lessen men's sense of duty, or to reconcile people to a selfish, idle, or useless life, is contrary both to Christianity and common sense. And all interpretations of Scripture which favour the doctrine that men have nothing to do but to believe and trust in Christ, are madness or impiety. The impression which God seeks to make on our minds from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation is, that if we would have His favour and blessing, we must do His will. The whole Bible is one great lesson of piety and virtue, of love and beneficence.

I know what can be said about doctrines; but there are no doctrines in the Scriptures at variance with the principle that "God will render to every man according to his deeds,—that to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality, He will give eternal life; and that to them who are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, He will recompense indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish." Nay, the doctrines of Scripture are employed throughout as motives and inducements to righteousness. This is their use. The blindest man on earth is not more blind than the man who can read the Scrip-

tures without perceiving that their object is to make men "perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

If I had my life to live over again, with my present views, I should think and preach very much as I used to do; only I should talk less about people and things which I did not approve, and take less notice of what people might say against me. I should trust more in God, and be less concerned about men.

It is often said, by Christians, that the reason why persons doubt the existence of God and a future life, is, that they have good cause to dread them, or, as Grotius expresses it, that they live in such a way that it would be to their interest that there should be no God or future life. This was not the case with me. My unbelief came upon me while diligently striving in all things to do God's will. My virtue outlived my faith. While a Christian, all that the world could promise or bestow seemed to be within my reach. Friends, popularity, wealth, power, fame, and visions of infinite usefulness to others, and of unbounded happiness to myself in the future, were all promised me as the reward of continued devotion to the cause of God and Christianity. As the reward of heresy and unbelief, I had to encounter suspicion, desertion, hatred, reproach, persecution, want, grief of friends and kindred, anxious days and sleepless nights, and almost every extreme of mental anguish.

It was, then, in no light mood that I gave up my

faith in God, and Christ, and immortality. The change in my views was no headlong hasty freak. It was the result of long and serious thought, of misguided, but honest, conscientious study. And hence I have sometimes thought, and am still inclined to think, that God had a hand in the matter,—that He led me, or permitted me to wander, along that strange and sorrowful road, and to pass through those dreary and dolorous scenes, and drink so deeply of so dreadful a cup of sorrows, for some good end. "He makes the wrath of man to praise Him," and perhaps He may turn our errors also to good account. I am not disposed to believe that my life has been a failure. It may, for anything I know, prove to have been a great success. "Men are educated largely by their mistakes," says one. It hardly seems likely that God should suffer a well-intentioned though weak and erring child, to ruin himself or others for ever. God is good, and the future will justify His ways, and all His saints shall praise Him.

My business, meanwhile, is to do what I can to promote the interests of truth and the welfare of mankind, and as far as possible, redeem lost time. I have a thousand causes for gratitude, and none for complaint. I am very happy in general, as happy as I desire to be, as it is good for me to be. And I certainly never ask God to make me more happy. I ask Him to make me wiser, and better, and more useful, but not more happy. At times my cup of joy runs over. It is strange, yet so it

is. But joy and sorrow are often found in company. Paul says of himself, "Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." The author of "Ecce Deus" says, "The good man's life is one unbroken repentance. Throughout his life he suffers on account of his sins. What then of joy?" he asks; and he answers, "It is contemporaneous with sorrow. They are inseparable. The joy that is born of sorrow is the only joy that is enduring."

CHAPTER XXIV.

TEACHINGS OF EXPERIENCE.

AND now for the lessons I have learnt on my way through life.

One, alas! is, that it is very difficult to bring young people to benefit by the experience of their elders. The heads of the young are generally full of foolish thoughts, and vain conceits, and wild dreams of what they are to be, and do, and enjoy in days to come, with large admixtures often of more objectionable materials; so that there is no room for the counsels and admonitions of their elders. Then there are some who do not *like* to be counselled or admonished. Counsel and admonition are proper enough for some people, but they are not required in their case, they imagine. They do not exactly think themselves beings of a superior order, beyond the reach of ordinary dangers; but they *act* as if they thought so.

We have no disposition to be severe with such persons, for we belonged to the same unhappy class ourselves. It never once entered our minds in our earlier days, that we could ever fall away from Christ. We saw the danger of others, but we never saw our own. We preached from the text, "Let him that thinketh

he standeth take heed lest he fall," and we pressed the solemn warning on our hearers with the greatest earnestness; but we never applied it to ourselves. We supposed ourselves secure. And if any one had told us that we should one day cease to be a Christian, fall into unbelief, and be ranked with the opponents of Christianity, we should have thought him insolent or mad. Yet you know what followed. We cannot, therefore, deal harshly with our self-confident brethren. But we must give them faithful warning. Be on your guard, then, my dear young friends. "Be not high minded, but fear." None are so weak as those who think themselves strong. None are in such danger as those who think themselves secure.

The second lesson I would name is this: It is dangerous to allow bad feeling to get into your hearts towards your Christian friends, or your brother ministers. It is especially dangerous to allow it to remain there. It works like the infection of the plague, and will in time infect your whole soul, impair the action of all its faculties, and after alienating you from individuals, alienate you next from the Church, and then from Christ and Christianity. Try, therefore, to keep your minds in a comfortable state towards all with whom you have to do. Guard against rash judgments and groundless suspicions; or you may take offence where none is intended. Keep your hearts as full as possible of Christian love. The more abundant your love, the less will be your liability either to give or take offence.

Another lesson I have learned on my way through life is, that it is dangerous to indulge a spirit of controversy. There may be occasions when controversy is a duty; but it is best, as a rule, just to state what you believe to be the truth, and leave it to work its way in silence. If people oppose it, misrepresent it, ridicule it, state it again at the proper time, with becoming meekness and gentleness, and commit it to the care of its great Patron. It is difficult to run into controversy without falling into sin. Controversy always tends to produce excess of personal feeling. It often degenerates into a quarrel, and ends in shame. Men go from principles to personalities; and instead of seeking each other's instruction, try only to humble and mortify each other. They begin perhaps with a love of truth, but end with a struggle for victory. They try to deal fairly at the outset, but become unscrupulous at last, and say or do anything that seems likely to harass or injure their opponents. The beginning of strife is like the letting out of water from a reservoir; there is first a drop, then a trickle, then a headlong rushing torrent, bearing down all before it to destruction. It is best, therefore, to take the advice of the proverb, and "leave off contention before it be meddled with."

Another lesson I have learnt on my way through life is, that ministers should deal very tenderly with their younger brethren. They should teach them so far as they are able, and check them when they see them doing anything really wrong; but they should

never interfere needlessly with their spiritual freedom. Young men of mind and conscience *will* think, and in some cases they will make mistakes. But the only men who never think wrong, are those who never think at all There never was a child born into the world, perhaps, that learned to walk without stumbling occasionally, and at times even falling outright. And there never was a spiritual child that learned to travel in the paths of religious investigation, without falling at times into error. What is to be done with the spiritual child on such occasions? What does the mother do when her baby falls? Does she run and kick the poor little creature, and say, "If ever you try to walk again, I will throw you into the gutter"? On the contrary, she runs and catches up the child, and if it has hurt itself, kisses the place to make it well, and says, "Try again, my darling; try again." And it *does* try again, and in course of time learns to walk as steadily as its mother; and when she begins to stagger under the infirmities of age, it takes her hand and stays her tottering steps.

And so it should be in spiritual matters. "We were gentle among you," says Paul to the Thessalonians, "even as a nurse cherisheth her children." And this is the example we should follow towards our brethren. Whether we would keep the young from erring, or bring back the unhappy ones who have gone astray, we must approach them tenderly and try to win their love and confidence. It would not be amiss if we could go on the supposition

that we are not quite perfect or infallible ourselves." And we ought to be willing to learn, as well as disposed to teach.

Calculate on meeting with trials or unpleasantness in the Church occasionally; for "offences are sure to come." Churches are made up of men, and men are full of imperfections, so that misunderstandings, at times, are inevitable. You may be misjudged or undervalued. But make up your minds by the help of God to bear all patiently. And understand that others may have to bear with as much unpleasantness from you as you have to bear with from them. And the trials we meet with in the Church will do us good, if we look at them in a proper light, and receive them in a proper spirit. They will tend to smooth the ruggedness of our temper, and rub off the unevenness of our character, provided we can keep ourselves from impatience and resentment. In going along the course of a brook or a river, you sometimes come upon a bend, where you find a heap of smooth and rounded pebbles thrown up. Did you ever ask yourselves how they came to be so round and smooth? When broken off from their respective rocks, they were as irregular in form, they had as sharp corners, and as rough and ragged and jagged edges, and were altogether as ugly and unsightly as any fragments of rock you ever looked upon. But they got into the water and the stream rolled them over, and rubbed them gently one against another, and this is the way they came to be so round and smooth. Now, here we are, living stones

in the stream of time, tumbled about and rubbed one against another. Let us take our rubbing patiently, and give ourselves a chance of getting rid of our unevenness, and of being brought into a comely shape. The rubbing will not continue long. When we have got our proper shape, God will translate us to another sphere, and place us in our respective positions in that living temple which He is building in the heavens, and our rubbing will be at an end for ever.

When I was first invited by the Primitive Methodists of Tunstall to preach in their chapel, one of the class-leaders and local preachers in the circuit threw up his plan, and sent in his class book, saying he would not belong to a society that would allow Joseph Barker to preach in their pulpits. He was under a wrong impression with regard to my views. One of the Tunstall travelling preachers went to see him, and told him he was labouring under a mistake, and advised him to take back his class book and plan. "Come," said he, "and have a little talk with Mr. Barker." He came and found he had been mistaken. "Forgive me," said he. "I cannot," said I. "You have committed no offence. I will save my pardons till you do something really wicked." "Then let us pray," said he; and we knelt down, and prayed for one another, and we all felt better. He came that night to hear me lecture. The subject was, The Church. I spoke of the unpleasantness we sometimes meet with from our brethren, and while exhorting my hearers to take their trials patiently, I used

the illustration I have given here. The old man sat on my left, in the front of the gallery, and was much excited. He wept. At length, unable any longer to restrain his feelings, he cried aloud, "Glory! Hallelujah! I'll stop and be rubbed." He did stop. But he had not much more rubbing to endure. In less than twelve months, on retiring one night to rest, in his usual health, he passed away suddenly and peacefully, to his rest in heaven. Let us "stop and be rubbed." Better be rubbed in the Church than thrown out into the big highway of the world, and broken with the strong man's hammer.

And do not suppose that you could escape rubbing by leaving the Church. You would be rubbed in the world. If you should have the unhappiness to get into the society of unbelievers, you would be rubbed there. It would be well if you did not get rubbed till there was nothing of you left. The only way to be happy is to keep your place in the Church, do your duty, and leave the rest to God.

And now with regard to reform. It is right that we should be reformers. There are plenty of evils both in Church and State, as well as in individuals, that it is our duty to do what we can to abate or cure. But there is a right and a wrong way of going about the business, and if we would avoid doing mischief while we are trying to do good, we must proceed with consideration and care.

The first thing, therefore, to be borne in mind by reformers is, that they should begin their reforming

efforts at home. They should get rid of all undue regard to their own honour, their own interests, or their own pleasure. They should govern their tempers carefully, and keep from all manifestations of anger or impatience. They should cultivate their better affections, and get their hearts as full as possible of love to God and Christ; and of love to truth, goodness, and mankind.

When they have got their own heads and hearts and habits put right, they should begin with their families, for it is a great advantage to reformers when it is known that their families are examples of wisdom and virtue.

They may now try what they can do for the improvement of their neighbours and friends, the Church and the State. But they will need to be very careful, for there are but few who like to be told of their faults, and but few who like to be convinced of their errors. It is far easier to get yourselves into trouble, than to cure your neighbours of their errors and faults. Nothing brings so rich and ready a crop of troubles as the suggestions and rebukes of reformers. One single hint at the errors of another will bring a hundred charges of heresy and sin against yourselves. So prepare for suffering.

In the next place, rely for success chiefly on a good and exemplary life. Be what you wish to bring others to be. Do what you desire to bring others to do. Prove that you really believe what you are striving to bring others to believe. Give no occasion

to people to say, "Physician, heal thyself." If the rebukes of others reveal to you a fault or error in yourselves, correct it at once, with all humility, and then go meekly on with your work.

Try to kill that which is evil in men and churches, by developing what is good. There are cases in which it is next to impossible to clear lands of weed by plucking up the intruders; but by ploughing deep, and putting in the seed of some useful grain that comes up early in spring before the weeds appear, and grows thick, you can choke and starve the weeds, prevent their coming to seed, and in a season or two extirpate them altogether. And so it is with regard to men and communities. You cannot reform them by battling direct with the evil that is in them; but by planting in them what is good, or developing the good already there, and promoting its rapid growth, you withdraw the supplies of nourishment from the evil, and it declines and dies. If you want better preaching than is common, preach better yourselves. If you want better books, write them or get others to do so. It is of very little use finding fault with what *is*, unless you can produce or prepare something better.

Aim at reforming *men*, rather than changing laws and institutions. If you enlighten and reform men, laws and institutions will be reformed as a matter of course. Laws and institutions are the work of men, and answer to the characters of their authors. If men are wise and good, they make wise and good laws

and institutions; and if they are ignorant and corrupt they make foolish and mischievous laws and institutions. We make all things in our own image, and bring down, or lift up, all things to our own level. Make a people wise and good, and bad laws will first become obsolete, and then be abolished. Leave people ignorant and depraved, and the best laws and institutions in the world will do them little or no good. The reform of man, therefore, is the reform of all things; his neglect is the ruin of all things.

Again: be just, and courteous, and kind, to those whom you seek to reform. Give them credit for all that is true and good in their creeds, characters, and customs. Do not be astonished or offended at their slowness to change. Good people generally change slowly, and the best most slowly of all. Consider the power of custom, and of hereditary tendencies; the force of education and reverence for parental authority; of men's natural and salutary distrust, and dread of what is new and untried.

Reformers must learn to wait as well as to work. You cannot make churches or states, or even individuals, all that you would like them to be, in a moment. You cannot make yourselves what you would like to be so very quickly. You will find the reform of your habits, tempers, and manners, a task for life. And if the change for the better is so slow in yourselves, what can you expect it to be in others?

It is the law of God that things shall pass from imperfection to perfection, by imperceptible grada-

tions. This law prevails in every department of the universe. All the great and beneficent operations of Nature are silent and slow. Nothing starts suddenly into being; nothing arrives instantly at perfection; nothing falls instantly into decay. How slowly the seed deposited in the ground springs up, putting forth first the blade, then the ear, and then the full ripe corn in the ear. Still slower is the growth of the majestic forest.

And the trees of greatest worth, which supply us with our costliest and most durable timber, have the slowest growth of all. And so it is with things that live and move. Their birth and growth are silent as the grave. And man, the highest of created beings, advances to maturity most tardily of all. Our development is so gradual that the change we undergo from day to day is imperceptible. The development of our minds is as gradual as the growth of our bodies. We gather our knowledge, a thought, a fact, a lesson at a time. We form our character, a line, a trace, at a time.

Political and social reforms have been as gradual. How slowly the institution of serfdom passed away. It died so gradually and so silently, that the most careful of our historians are unable to tell us when the last white bondman of our island dropped his chains. And the guarantees of our political rights have accumulated as slowly. The right of free trade is the result of a century's employment of the platform and the press. The suppression of the slave trade was

the result of Christian principles working steadily for centuries. Leisurely movement is the eternal and universal law. And it is no use complaining; you cannot alter it. You cannot make a hen hatch her eggs in less than three weeks, do what you will. You may crack the shells thinking to let the chickens out a little earlier, but you let death in, and the chickens never do come out at all. Where political or social changes have been forced and effected hastily, mischief and misery have been the consequence. The evil results of sudden and violent changes are sure; the good results are doubtful. And when sudden and violent changes are followed with good, the good is the result of the slow and peaceful processes which preceded them. A violent shower does good, but it is because it *is* a shower, and not because it is violent. The same amount of rain falling gently would have done still more good. When I crossed the Atlantic, we had a gentle breeze for a time, and we went along at the rate of thirteen knots an hour. After awhile the wind became more furious and blew a gale; but instead of increasing our speed, it reduced it more than one half. And so it is in Nature, in history, and in society. "The more haste the less speed." I have had proof of this more than once in my own experience. I once lived in a house terribly infested with rats, and wanted to get rid of them as fast as I could, for they were a great nuisance. But I was in too big a hurry to succeed. One night I heard a great splash in the watertub in

the cellar. "That's a rat," said I, "I'll despatch that anyhow;" and I took the lighted candle and poker, and hastened into the cellar, to kill the creature at once. When the rat saw me with candle and poker, it made an extra spring, completely cleared the edge of the tub, and got right away into its hole. I was in such a hurry to kill it that I saved its life. When I got to it, it was drowning itself as nicely as possible, and if I had had patience to wait, it would have been dead in ten minutes. But because I would not wait, and let it die quietly, it would not die at all. And it may be living now for anything I know, and may have bred a hundred other rats since then, and all because I would not let it die in peace. There are rats still in many houses. There are rats in the Church and rats in the State. There are rats of despotism and tyranny, rats of slavery and war. There are rats of superstition and idolatry, of heresy and infidelity, of intemperance and licentiousness. The vermin are everywhere. And it is right to try and kill them off. But we had better go to work carefully. We cannot put things right instantly. And when wicked laws, or vicious principles, have received their death blow, we had better give them time to die in quiet. In no case should we resort to violence. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual; yet mighty through God to the pulling down of the strongholds of evil.

During the remaining years of his life, my uncle

continued to work quietly and unostentatiously in behalf of the Primitive Methodists. He had lost none of his old power either in the pulpit or on the platform, and drew as large congregations as ever he did. Still he could not quite live down the uneasy feeling which had been engendered by his past career.

The following account of the last years of Mr. Barker's life, written by his eldest son, from Salt Lake City, where he was then living, to his cousin, will be found extremely interesting, and will be perused by thousands in every part of England with feelings of the deepest sorrow and sympathy.

"I am living here in Salt Lake, the home of the Mormons. This is a country of mountains and valleys. It is a wild and barren region—naturally—but the Mormons by hard work and irrigation have converted large portions of the valleys into fruitful gardens and farms. The mountains contain immense bodies of minerals, and I have been out here for three years superintending several mines of lead and silver. This is only a temporary home; my settled residence is at Omaha, at Nebraska, where my sister and brother reside with their families.

"My dear father had been ill for several years before he last left England. He was suffering from acute dyspepsia, brought on by too much mental labour. My dear mother's death affected him greatly, and he came to America with the intention of resting, but this was contrary to his nature. He always saw so much he wished to do, that as soon as he began

to regain his health he started again to lecture and to write books. Had he used ordinary care, or done an ordinary amount of work, he ought, with his otherwise sober and virtuous life, to have lived many years longer. He only stayed a short time at Omaha, then went east, where he made Philadelphia his head-quarters, preaching on Sundays, and on week-days lecturing for nearly every denomination. His chief friends were among the Methodists and Presbyterians,—he was a member of the Preachers' Societies of both denominations. At Philadelphia he printed several books and numbers of tracts, in defence of the Christian religion, and from all I can learn was held in high esteem by both bodies. Unfortunately I have no copies of his works here, otherwise I would like to send you some of them; some day I will do so. He generally returned and spent several months in the summer at Omaha, with his family. In 1874 he spent three months with me here at Salt Lake. He had had a very severe illness, and on his recovery I sent for him. He enjoyed his trip, and it did him much good. But as soon as he felt able again to do a little work, no inducement could keep him with me. He returned and spent the winter near Boston. There, in December 1874, he was again very ill. In the early spring he started for Omaha, but could only travel slowly, and stayed several weeks to rest with kind friends at New York and Philadelphia. It was June before he got to Omaha. He was then in a

very feeble state, and every one saw he had not long to live. He had jaundice, and dropsy had attacked his lower limbs; but when a little better he was very hopeful of his recovery, and would still attempt to write. I had arranged to be married to an Omaha lady, and returned to Omaha for that purpose about the middle of August, hoping also to find my father better. The day I arrived, he sent my brother-in-law to bring me at once to the farm, as he was feeling very unwell and was anxious to see me. I went to him at once. I found a sudden change had come over him, that he was ill and nervous. He was much pleased to see me, was very affectionate, and talked a great deal. From that day to his death, a month later nearly, I was with him night and day. His appetite failed, long periods of dozing came on him. Till within a week of his death I drove him out in the carriage every day, which he enjoyed, but would doze half the time. Finally, diarrhœa set in, his appetite completely failed, and congestion and paralysis set in. It was not until he began to feel the last, that he gave up his hopes of ultimate recovery. His mind, all through to the last articulation, was clear and sound, and but for excessive weakness he would have talked much more than he did. He arranged all his affairs, re-made his will and deeded his property to trustees, and talked over all with me, my sister and brother. He was anxious and careful that his last confession of his faith in Christ and his belief in the Christian religion should

be written down and received by his friends, that there might be no doubt or dispute about it. He suffered much the last two days, but was resigned and patient, and finally slumbered away. My sister and I did the last services for him; and we buried him at Omaha.

"His death has been commented upon by most of the religious press and some of the secular. And generally in a kind and respectful spirit; doing justice to his abilities, forgiving his mistakes, and acknowledging the sincerity of his life. We have all felt his loss very much. Our own lives have for so long a period revolved round his, that his death has left a great void both in our lives and our affections. My father was a sincere and a good and truly virtuous man. He was passionate, self-willed, but, though he made mistakes and went wrong, he was always virtuous and always desired to do good to his kind. He sacrificed both his own and his family's worldly interests to a sometimes mistaken, but always sincere desire to do his duty to God and his fellow-men. He sacrificed his health and shortened his life by an anxious and nervous desire to undo his anti-Christian work, which in his last years he never ceased to regret, and never relaxed his efforts to try and make easy the return of the unbeliever to Christianity.

"My business demanding my return to Salt Lake, and having been detained so long by my father's illness, I was married very quietly and returned here two weeks after his death. JOSEPH BARKER, *Junr.*"

I feel I cannot bring these Memoirs to a more fitting conclusion than by presenting the following letter, written by my uncle only a few weeks before his death to Dr. Cooke, and the Doctor's remarks thereon, which appeared just after his decease in the pages of the *Methodist New Connexion Magazine*,—

"DR. COOKE TO THE EDITOR.

"It will afford pleasure to your readers to know that Mr. Joseph Barker died in the faith, and in peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. A short time before his death he wrote me the following letter, under date from Omaha, Nebraska, August 1875:—

"MY DEAR, GOOD FRIEND,—I received your letter, but after date; hence the delay of my answer. . . . I am very feeble, and I can write only a few lines at a time, or I should write at some length. . . . I do indeed still cling to Christ. He is, in God, my all, my Teacher, Guide, Example, Saviour, and unfailing Comforter. And I live and labour, and spend my all for Him; and if I had my old strength and millions of money, all, I believe, would be His. When not tortured by bodily pain, I am, as a rule, unspeakably happy in His love; when *racked and tortured*, patience and resignation are all I can boast, and I am so happy now. My pains have gone for a time, and I am in ecstasies. When the torture returns I can only say, 'Thy will be done.'

"Thanks for your kind letter; thanks for all your kindness, I wish I could see your children who are in America. If I get strong again I think I shall. My love to them.

"I am on my farm, and all things are so beautiful. I have published a book, 'Jesus: a Portrait;' I have another in the press, but cannot proceed with it on account of my utter weak-

ness. I hope some day, however, to send you both. I am... obliged to close. God bless you.

"Your most affectionate friend and brother in Christ,

"JOSEPH BARKER.

"I am sure the above letter will be read with much interest and pleasure by all who know Mr. Barker's history. Only six weeks after the above letter was written Mr. Barker died, and this day I received from his eldest son a letter, enclosing the memorial-card, which contains the dying testimony of his father. The card states as follows:—

"IN MEMORY OF

JOSEPH BARKER,

PREACHER, AUTHOR, AND CONTROVERSIALIST,

WHO DIED AT OMAHA, NEBRASKA, U.S.,

SEPTEMBER 15, 1875,

IN THE MIDST OF HIS FAMILY.

BORN AT BRAMLEY, NEAR LEEDS, YORKSHIRE, ENGLAND,

MAY 11, 1806.

"A few days before his death he made a final arrangement of his affairs, and, feeling that paralysis was approaching, he called his eldest son, Mr. Gilbert, his lawyer, and Mr. Kellom, one of his trustees, to his bedside, and said, 'I feel that I am approaching my end, and desire that you should receive my last words and be witness to them. I wish you to witness that

I am in my right mind, and fully understand what I have just been doing; and, dying, that I die in the firm and full belief in Jesus Christ, and in the faith and love of His religion as revealed in His life and works, as described in the New Testament; that I have an abiding faith in and love of God, as God is revealed to us by His Son Jesus Christ, and I die trusting in God's infinite love and mercy, and in full faith of a future and better life. I am sorry for my past errors; but during the last years of my life I have striven to undo the harm I did, by doing all I was able to serve God, by showing the beauty and wisdom of the religion of His Son Jesus Christ. I wish you to write down and witness this my last confession of faith, that there may be no doubt about it.'

"Not a few good people doubted the sincerity of Mr. Barker's profession of Christianity; but surely this testimony in the face of the eternal world will satisfy them, and cause all who love Christ to rejoice and magnify the riches of His grace. Wishing you abundant success in your labours,

"I am, yours truly,

"WILLIAM COOKE.

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